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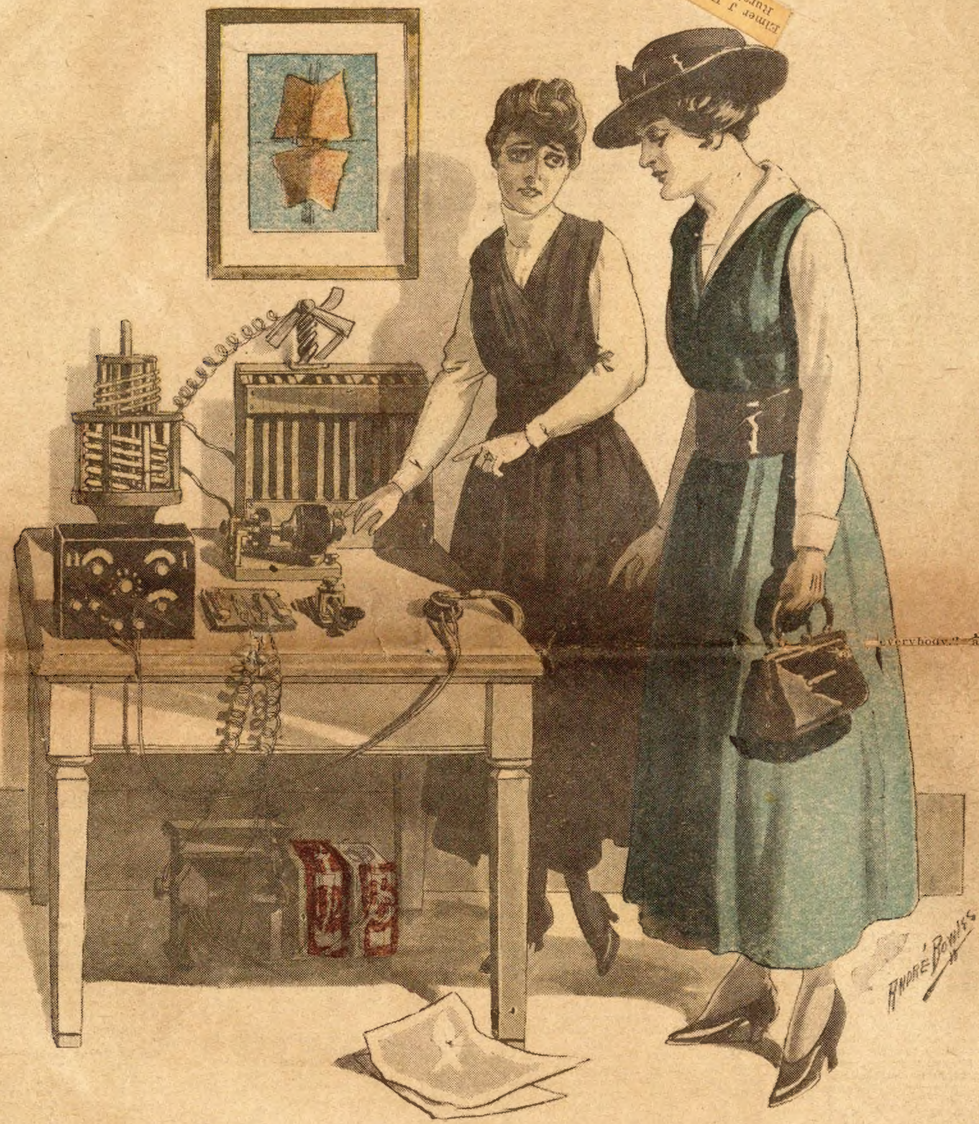

Miss Blunt, Detective

Or

Mystery Within Mystery

By Crittenden Marriott

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCING WILLIE BLUNT.

THE story being the strangest, as well as the most mysterious and dramatic, that has ever come to my knowledge, I hasten to commit it to paper.

Behind a door that opened on the corridor in one of New York's skyscrapers—a door marked "Wilhelmina Blunt, Consultant," and nothing more—Miss Willie Blunt sat waiting for clients that did not come. Four months before, basing her presumption on her success in solving certain problems that had come to her in the course of her work as a woman reporter and on a rather widespread acquaintance (the sort of acquaintance that a dog, if he could speak, would probably call a barking acquaintance) with the heads of numerous corporations, she had thrown up her newspaper job and had staked her all on an effort to build up a detective business that would play the game fairly and not on the lines that seemed to her to be almost universal. So far as she could see, women were doing almost anything and everything; and, in her opinion, were doing them quite as skilfully and a good deal more decently than men; but she knew of none that was conducting a detective bureau. Of course, there were plenty of women connected with bureaus run by men, but most of them were employed in altogether subordinate positions, and at the best were merely carrying out plans that had been mapped out by men." Willie believed that she could map things as well as any he that wore trousers. So she had taken the plunge.

So far the results had been far below her hopes. She had known, of course, that she would have to "show them," but she had not realized how very difficult it would be to get a chance to show them. No one, not even the men whom she had known and on whose friendship she had relied, had as yet placed a single "case" in her hands. When she called on them at their offices—at long, intervals, for she did not wish to make herself a nuisance—and suggested casually that even a woman detective could not detect unless somebody gave her something to detect, she received promises galore, but no work. "We don't need anybody at present, thank the Lord," was the usual answer. "When we do——" Meanwhile she contemplated with growing anxiety the steady dwindling of her bank account. During the four months, except for one particularly outrageous divorce case which she refused to touch even with tongs, no one offered her any work at all.

As she sat in her office, almost despairing, she mentally reviewed the events of the last months, wondering whether she had better try to get back her newspaper job. One crumb of hope and only one deterred her. When, about a week before, she had applied to Frederick Harvey, New York manager of the Fidelity Life Insurance Company, for work and had received the usual reply, she had burst out.

"Good gracious!" she cried. "What's come to New York? Has it turned moral all of a sudden? When I was a newspaper woman there wasn't a day that I didn't hear of dozens of crimes. And I read them in the paper every day now. But when I ask for one to run down—for just one measly little crime—everybody tells me that the millenium has come and there's nothing doing. I don't want my friends to get into trouble just to supply me with work, but I can't see why all the associates of everybody I know should have turned so disgustingly moral all of a sudden."

Harvey leaned back in his chair and grinned. "I'll tell you what the trouble is, if you really want to know, Miss Willie," he said. "In the first place, you are so blamed dear and friendly and sweet that nobody likes to set you to browsing mentally among the slimy details that go with about two-thirds of all detective cases. And in the second place, nobody likes to expose you physically to the very real dangers that go with the other third."

"Humph!" Miss Blunt wrinkled her pretty nose. "How about the wolf at the door?" she inquired. "Is he a mental or a physical danger? Do any of you realize that in saving me from—er—things, you are exposing me to him? His howling is getting uncomfortably close."

"Is it, really?" Harvey's smile faded and he leaned forward. "O course, you know if you need help all you've got to do is to say so. But I know you won't ask it or take it. But—Oh! Why don't you give it up, Willie? Why don't you let me do your wolf fighting for you? I've asked you so often. Is it so hard to [illegible]—for me?"

Slowly Willie Blunt shook her head. "It isn't that exactly," she said. "It wouldn't be hard at all—for you. . . . No. Wait a minute. If you had asked me six months ago I think maybe—maybe—but you didn't ask me then; and now——"

"I didn't have this job then," shouted Harvey. "I got it after you had started for yourself. Oh! Willie——"

But Willie drew back hastily. "Now it's a point of honor, don't you see? I couldn't marry just for a home. I just couldn't. I'd feel degraded if——"

"Degraded?"

"Yes. I couldn't do it. Really, I couldn't—Fred. I've started this thing and I've got to make good, or I'll never respect myself again. But how can I make good, when nobody will give me a chance? If somebody'd give me a chance I'd find out what I could do, and then I'd be willing to stop. I wish"—Willie snapped her little white teeth hard—"I wish to goodness men wouldn't be so darned chivalrous."

"Then—then"—Fred Harvey's eyes gleamed—"then if—when—Oh, Willie!"

"I didn't say so." Miss Blunt shrank back in panic. "I only said——"

"I know what you said, and I'm going to take you up on it. The next time—the very next time the company needs a detective I'm going to call you in and give you complete charge, no matter how rough and raw and dangerous a job it is. I give you my word. Shake on it." He held out his hand. "I've got to go up to Maine on business tomorrow on a two weeks' trip, but I'll leave orders to call you in if anything breaks loose while I'm gone."

Willie was thinking of this promise as she sat in her office. A week had passed since it had been made and she had received no call, either from the Fidelity or from any one else. In reality she had not expected to hear from the Fidelity so quickly, and she was not disappointed by her failure to do so. Even a big company like the Fidelity was unlikely to have cases coming up all the time. Besides, Fred Harvey was out of town and would not be back for a week yet. But—her money was about gone. It would take time to get a newspaper place—perhaps much time. Would she not better begin to look for one while she could afford to eat?

Almost she decided that she would better. And then—and then—somehow she felt that Fred's coming back would be the signal for her employment. He was so—so dependable. She had known him for a long time, and (except in the matter of her detective work, of which he had heartily disapproved from the first), he had never failed her. He would not fail her now, she was sure. He would give her a chance to prove her powers. And she would prove them! Oh, yes! She would prove them, not merely for the satisfaction of showing that she was not a four-flusher, but because, when once she had proved them she could—could—— A wave of color flooded Miss Blunt's cheeks and spread until it flamed on the tips of her shell-like ears.

And then the telephone rang.

Willie caught it up eagerly. It had not rung very often in the past three months. Almost she could count her fingers the times that it had rung. Very easily she could remember the eagerness with which she had caught it up the first time, hoping that it meant that somebody wanted her service—and the disappointment with which she had hung it up again. Later calls had come, but none of them brought what she hoped for, and she had gradually lost hope. This time, however, for some indefinable reason, her expectations soared.

"Hello!" she called.

"Hello," came the answer, sharp, quick, excited. "That you, Miss Blunt?"

It was Harvey's voice. Clearly he had cut short his trip and had come back to town. Why had he come? Could it be that something had "broken loose"—something big? Eagerly she answered.

"Good!" Again came the voice. "I've just got back. We've got something big on. At least it looks big. They called me back by wire, and—well! I'm going to give it to you. Can you come over at once?"

"Of course. I'll——"

"Wait a minute. Have you a newspaper file handy?"

"Yes."

"Look in last Monday's paper and you'll see a story about the sudden death at Chicago, on his wedding trip, of a young New York millionaire named Hurd. Maybe you noticed it."

"I did notice it." Willie was panting with excitement.

"All right. He took out a half-million dollar policy with us in favor of his bride-to-be a week before he died. Our doctor reported him in splendid health then. Now he's dead—dead of enlargement of the heart. Suspicious, very. Better bring the paper with you and study it on your way over. Come right away."

As the telephone clicked Miss Blunt sprang up and ran to the newspaper file that hung against the wall. A moment later, with the paper she wanted in her hands, she fairly ran out of the room and scurried from the building and along the street to the nearest elevated railway station. Not till, breathless and panting, she was ensconced in a seat did [illegible] scan the article. It had interested her when she read it and she remembered it fairly well; but now she reread it with intense concentration.

"Millionaire bridegroom dies," ran the headlines. "Harry Hurd succumbs of heart disease on wedding trip. Mrs. Hurd, nee Corinne de Nemours, recently of Belgium, prostrated."

Lower down came the text: "Chicago, Sept. 5.—Mr. Harry Hurd of Rochpelle, New York, who arrived in this city last night with his bride, died early this morning from acute hypertrophy of the heart. He was taken ill on the train, but managed to reach the Grand Central Hotel, where physicians were summoned. Their efforts, however, proved unavailing.

"Mr. Hurd was married at his home in Rochpelle on Saturday evening last to Miss Corinne de Nemours, who with her father, Ferdinand de Nemours, was driven out of Belgium by the German invasion, and came to this country about ten days ago on the steamship Milwaukee. On board the steamer she met Mr. Hurd, who was returning from a business trip to England. Love at first sight seems to have followed, for the young couple were married a few days after their arrival in New York.

"Mr Hurd was president of the Hurd Wireless Coherer Company of New York and London. His home was at Rochpelle, N. Y., one of the suburban towns that border Long Island Sound, just outside greater New York.

"Mr. Hurd's body will be taken East for interment."

The train stopped and Willie dropped the paper and jumped up to race for the door. The grass did not grow under her feet as she sped over the two blocks that intervened between the elevated station and the offices of the Fidelity. Of course, grass gets little chance to grow under anybody's feet in the city of Rush and Roar, but it got even less chance than usual to grow under Willie's. This was her chance and she meant to make the best of it.

Nor did the insurance people seem less anxious for Willie to come than she was to arrive. The moment she entered the outer office the boy at the gate jumped up and threw it open. "Go right back to Mr. Harvey's room, please," he said.

But Willie stopped. She knew the boy of old; in fact, she had got him his post. And she did not want to seem too hurried. "How are you getting on, Pat?" she asked.

"Bully! Sure, it's mighty nice people they are here! But you'd better be after gettin' a move on, ma'am. The boss is red-headed altogether lookin' for you."

Willie, as a matter of fact, was scarcely less excited than the "boss" could possibly be, but she was determined to conceal it. She nodded laughingly to Pat and went on to the back without obvious haste.

As she reached the manager's office she heard voices in hot discussion that penetrated even the thick oak of the carefully closed door. Nor did they cease when she turned the knob and went in.

Harvey was at his desk, talking violently to a handsome gray-bearded man who sat before him. The fresh color he had worn when Willie saw him last had changed to a fiery red; and the smooth surface of his cheeks was broken with deep-cut wrinkles that changed his entire appearance. "But here's the proof," he rasped, pounding with his fist upon a telegram that lay spread out before him. "D—n it, man; here's the proof. You can't get away from it. Doctor Vilas is known from the Atlantic to the Pacific and Doctor Winslow mighty near as far. They both certify that Hurd died of hypertrophy of the heart; and you know as well as I do that a heart doesn't enlarge in a week. And you know as well as I do, and better, that no doctor worth his salt could fail to spot a man that had it if he made any sort of examination of him. That's true, isn't it?"

"Yes. But——"

"But nothing! Here—" Harvey caught up another paper and shook it in the doctor's face—"here's your report of less than a week ago saying that Harry Hurd's heart is absolutely sound. What the devil——" Harvey caught sight of Willie and jumped up. "Oh! Here you are, Miss Blunt," he vociferated. "Thank the Lord you've come. I've been wanting you. Sit down, please! You know Doctor Stackpole, don't you? I've just been asking him how he came to certify that Hurd's heart was sound when he was really on the point of death."

The frown on the Doctor's face had grown blacker. He nodded to Willie, then swung back to the man who was heckling him. Something, probably a desire to keep his job, seemed to have restrained him at first, but now he appeared to have come to the end of his patience. As fiercely as Harvey he pounded the table. "He wasn't dying of hypertrophy," he thundered. "The man I examined wasn't dying of anything. His heart was perfect. I'm not a fool. I know hypertrophy. Any medical student knows it. And what's more, I remembered this case very well and I examined the man very carefully. Policies for half a million aren't so blamed common even with the Fidelity. I noticed the amount of the policy at the time, and I looked at the man with particular curiosity in consequence and examined him with especial care. I couldn't have made a mistake. The man I examined was not suffering with any disease of the heart. Certainly he was not suffering with one so severe as to bring about his death within a few days. If the man named in that policy died of hypertrophy, he wasn't the man I examined. He must have sent a substitute to be examined in his place."

Harvey glared. "Nonsense!" he thundered. "Hurd was here, in this office on Wednesday—a week ago today. He said he was in a hurry because he was going to be married Saturday; and that he came because he had seen me at Rochpelle, where we both live. So I wrote his policy myself and sent him to you to be examined. I telephoned you that he was coming and——"

"Yes. You did. And a man came into my office ten minutes later and said that he was Mr. Hurd and that you had sent him, and I examined and passed him. That man was sound—a first-class risk. But I don't know that he was the man you sent."

The red on Harvey's face faded to a sickly pallor. Abruptly he grew very calm. His brows knitted themselves. Evidently he was thinking back and thinking hard. "You had his description on the application blank," he rumbled slowly. "He wrote it himself, in my presence, right here in the office. And I signed it."

"Yes, and the man who came to my office brought a fresh-written application with your name on it. And he fitted the description perfectly. Of course, thousands of other men fitted it, too. Brown hair, brown eyes, light mustache, five feet ten, one hundred and fifty pounds—not a thing distinctive about it. It might almost as well have said two eyes and a nose."

"And you think——"

"I don't think. I know. If Harry Hurd died of hypertrophy of the heart, and I suppose he did, since Vilas and Winslow say so, then Harry Hurd was not the man I examined. Even the rawest medical student couldn't be fooled on an advanced case of hypertrophy. It's obvious on its face. And that's flat."

CHAPTER II.

ERROR OR SUBSTITUTION.

FOR a full minute no one spoke. The Doctor shot his bomb and threw himself back in his chair and glared at Harvey, who sat silent with knitted brows. Willie Blunt also held her peace, looking from one man to the other.

Finally Harvey laughed harshly. "It's easy to say that, Doctor," he rasped. "And I don't say you're not right. But we'll have to prove it. And it'll take some proving. What you say amounts to a flat assertion that there has been a deliberate plot to swindle the company by sending some counterfeit to take the examination——"

"That's what I believe," shot out the Doctor.

"Well, if you're right the thing's been engineered by the biggest lot of fools I ever heard of. They must know that we'd suspect substitution the very first thing; and that all we'd have to do would be to send you to view Hurd's body and see whether he was the man who came to your office. And they'd know that if he wasn't they'd be almost sure to go to State's prison! It's too raw."

The Doctor seemed a little nonplused. But he did not surrender. "They'd impeach my testimony," he said feebly. "They'd swear that I was lying to save the company——"

"To clear your own skirts, you mean. Suppose they did? They'd know they couldn't get away with it. You say that no physician could fail to detect hypertrophy by even the most casual examination. Wouldn't Vilas and Winslow testify to that?"

"Yes! They would! But——"

"But nothing! Even a mutton-headed jury couldn't get over testimony like that. And other things would come out. They always do. At the best the swindlers would know that they would have to sue for their money and that they could win only after a long-drawn-out litigation. Rogues don't want lawsuits—not with State's prison in the background. They want to make a quick getaway. Besides, it was Harry Hurd whose application I drew. I live at Rochpelle and where he has his home, and tho I never met him I've seen him off and on for at least five years. It was he, all right."

"Oh! You know him, do you?" The Doctor's tone was peculiar.

Harvey did not notice it. "Yes! I know him," he reiterated. "If he didn't come to your office, where was he and what was he doing while the substitute was there? He wasn't ill or dead then. He was married Saturday night all right—married by Doctor Maybury, who had baptized him and had known him all his life; and whose daughter, Linda, everybody in Rochpelle expected him to marry."

"Oh!" Doctor Stackpole frowned. "So Hurd had jilted the minister's daughter, had he? Is there any significance in that?"

"Not a blame bit. Anyway, we're not talking about that now. The point is that if there was any substitution Hurd must have been privy to it."

"Perhaps he was!" The Doctor died hard.

"Perhaps the skies fell, too," returned Harvey, scornfully. Then he turned to Willie. "What do you think, Miss Blunt?" he asked. "You're keeping very quiet."

Willie smiled. "I think you and the Doctor are talking at cross purposes," she answered. "Talking won't get you anywhere. Facts are the only things that will do that. The first thing to do is for the Doctor to see the body and find out whether or not it's that of the man he examined. After that we can talk. The paper said that Mr. Hurd's body would be brought East. Has it arrived yet?"

Harvey started. "I don't know," he confessed. "I got the news up in Maine yesterday and jumped the first train for home. I haven't been back an hour yet."

"We must find out at once. Mr. Hurd died Sunday night. This is Wednesday. He may have been buried already; probably he has been. If not, he may be at any moment. Where would it probably be?"

"Probably at Rochpelle. The Hurds have a lot there."

"Good. Call up the cemetery and find out what information they have."

"Right. I'm a fool. You're the only one here that's got any sense, Miss Blunt." Harvey reached for the telephone and asked for Rochpelle.

While he waited for the connection Miss Blunt spoke rapidly. "Remember," she continued, "that if there has been a fraud Mrs. Hurd and her father are almost certainly involved. Mrs. Hurd is the beneficiary, isn't she? Who are they, anyway? The dispatch from Chicago says they are Belgians named De Nemours. It got its information from Mrs. Hurd, of course. There wasn't any one else in Chicago to give it. Has the Fidelity an agency in Belgium?"

"No! Not since the war began."

"How about London? The De Nemours sailed from there."

"We've got a London agency, of course. We had a large one there before the war broke. Since then we've cut it down. War insurance is too risky. We've got only one man there now, Johnson by name."

"He'll do fine. Cable him to learn all he can about the De Nemours at once. If they——"

The ring of the telephone broke sharply in, and Harvey snatched the receiver from the hook. "Hello, Rochpelle," he called. "Give me the cemetery, please."

A moment's delay followed, of which he took advantage. "If it's really a case of substitution and murder they'll never let Stackpole see the body," he said, "and we can't insist without showing our hand. And it's a pretty strenuous proceeding to say that we think that Mrs. Hurd and her father are trying to swindle us. We've got to have some proof first."

Miss Blunt considered. "Yes, I suppose we have," she agreed. "But when they ask you to pay the policy——"

"Yes! When they do! It will be different then! But they haven't asked us yet. And till they do we haven't any standing—— yes. Hello. Is this the Rochpelle Cemetery. . . . This is Mr. Harvey of the Fidelity Insurance Company, of New York. Can you tell me when the interment of Mr. Hurd's body will take place? . . . What! Hold the line a minute."

Harvey put his hand over the mouthpiece of the telephone. "He says it's taking place now," he groaned. "The cortege is just leaving the chapel! What's to be done? I can't think straight."

"Get Monsieur de Nemours to come to the telephone," shot in Willie, promptly. "Ask him to wait till Doctor Stackpole can get to the cemetery. Tell him—Oh! you know what to tell him! Tell him anything—matter of business—necessary for your own physician to see body—mandatory when the policy is so large—Bluff him! Oh! You know!"

"Right!" Harvey took his hand from the mouthpiece and spoke again. "Find Monsieur de Nemours," he commanded. "Tell him he must delay the interment till I can speak with him over the 'phone. Tell him it's very important. Hurry! I'll hold the wire!"

Harvey drew back. "The man's gone," he said. "I guess Monsieur de Nemours will come to the 'phone, but I'll bet he won't consent to any delay. And the dickens of it is that it's entirely reasonable of him to refuse. I've been doing insurance work for twenty years, and I never knew of a funeral being held up between the chapel and the grave. It's unheard of. We can't draw any inference from a refusal—if he does refuse."

Neither Doctor Stackpole nor Miss Blunt spoke. Neither of them had any comfort to offer. Both knew very well that Harvey spoke the truth.

Despondently Harvey went on. "Another trouble is that we can't afford any notoriety till we are sure of our ground. We've just had to fight two fraudulent suits. Both were rank frauds on their faces and we won both of them. But does the public know that? Not a bit of it. The public knows only that we have contested a couple of claims. They say 'Confound the Fidelity. I want to leave my widow insurance. I don't want to leave her a lawsuit.' And so—— Yes? Hello! Is this Monsieur de Nemours? . . . How do you do, monsieur? This is Mr. Harvey of the Fidelity Insurance Company of New York. I have just learned that the interment of your late son-in-law, Mr. Hurd, is about to take place. . . . Well, we've been trying to get into communication with you for some time, but we didn't seem able to connect till now. Could you delay the funeral till our medical director can get down to the cemetery? . . . Yes, I know how it must strike you. But when a man has as big a policy with us as Mr. Hurd had, we—what's that?"

Harvey's brows wrinkled as he listened to the words that came over the wire. "He seems excited," he murmured. "Maybe he's lying, but he doesn't seem to know that Hurd had insurance."

Once more the manager spoke into the mouthpiece. "Yes. Mr. Hurd took out a policy with us just a week ago—a very large policy—in favor of your daughter. . . . Oh! He didn't tell her? Probably he wanted to surprise her. . . . Yes! I know it's an amazing request. But you see our position. Our rules require us to see the body when the policy is as big as this——"

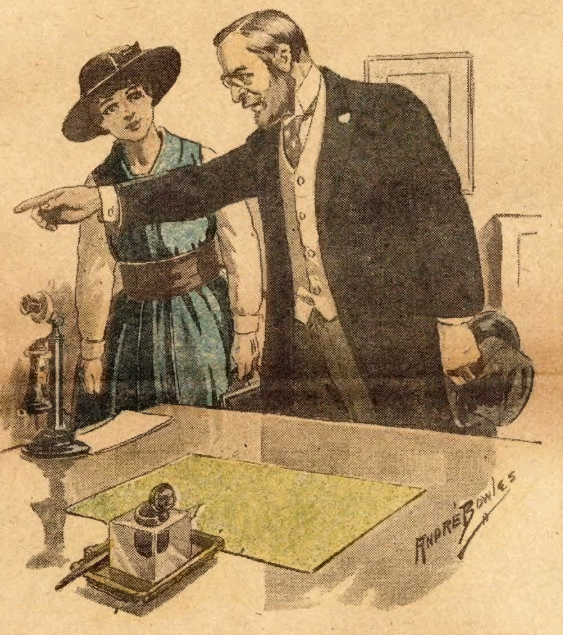
Harvey looked at Willie, and the Doctor and frowned harder than ever. "If he's acting, he's doing it might well," he confessed. Then into the 'phone: "Yes. It's big. Five hundred thousand, in fact."

Again he looked at Willie. "He certainly is doing it well," he reiterated. "As near as I can tell the news seemed to stun him—— Eh? What's that, Monsieur de Nemours? You're sorry, but you've got to go. Yes! of course! You'll delay the interment till our director—What? Respect for your daughter compels you to refuse? But you can't refuse. Refusal may forfeit the policy? . . . Yes! But—— Oh! Confound it! The fellow's gone."

Harvey slammed the receiver back on the hook. "He's hung up," he gritted. "As soon as he knew the amount he wanted to run. He said he had to go, that he couldn't keep his beloved daughter standing at the graveside any longer; that money was nothing compared to the respect he owed to a woman and a widow in sore distress. And, darn it, he's right. Allowing for French flubdub he's right. If I had a daughter I wouldn't let her be kept standing at the grave of her husband that way. But all the same, I'll bet the fellow knows that we can't forfeit a policy on any such ground as that. Lord! I wonder if Hurd did fail to tell about his policy. He was rich enough to forget it. And he was rich enough without the policy to warrant half a dozen murders. And then, of course, this may be all moonshine. The De Nemours may be wholly innocent. They may be——"

"It depends largely on who they are, doesn't it?" questioned Miss Blunt, shrewdly. "If you'll cable your London man——"

Harvey struck one fist into the other. "Of course it does," he vociferated. "Lord! I'm rattled. I'm half crazy, to tell the truth! I'll cable Johnson at once." He reached forward and pressed a button. Then a thought seemed to strike him. "There's one thing we can do while we're waiting to hear," he said. "Doctor! You go straight down to Rochpelle and insist on seeing both the De Nemours and get them to give you particulars of Hurd's death. They can't refuse that. And it doesn't matter if they do refuse. It isn't particulars I want you to get. I've never been in Hurd's house, but I've been told that there's a full-length portrait of him hanging in the big entrance hall, just as you go in. If you get to see it, you can probably tell in a minute if it's a picture of the man you examined. Hurry."



"I don't think. I know!"

Doctor Stackpole got up instantly and started toward the door. But Miss Blunt called to him, and he stopped on the threshold. "Just a moment, Doctor," she begged. Then she turned to Harvey. "Wouldn't it be well for Doctor Stackpole to get a sort of mental Bertillon description of Mrs. Hurd and Mr. De Nemours if he can?" she asked. "It's just possible that they may be known to the London police under different names. If——"

"Of course! Of course! Doctor! Get the best descriptions you can and let me have them as soon as possible."

When the Docter had hurried away, Harvey turned to Miss Blunt. "I'm all in, Willie," he confessed miserably. "All in. This is a horrible shock to me. It's got my goat, all right. Coming so soon after I took charge here it means ruin unless it's cleared up absolutely. Of course, if everything's straight, or if we can prove it's a swindle, it'll be all right. But if it's left in doubt the directors will never stand for it. And—oh, Willie! Willie! I hoped so much. I wanted to ask you— But that's all over now. I'm a ruined man and——"

"Nonsense!" Miss Blunt had flushed a delicate pink as Harvey spoke, but her tones were as cool and crisp as ever. "Nonsense! You're not ruined! Not a bit of it! Every company's got to fight swindlers. You'll fight this gang and beat them, too. You haven't begun to fight yet. Even the first round isn't over. These rogues—if they are rogues—had all the time there is to get ready and they must have framed what they thought was a lead-pipe cinch. Now it's our turn. Cheer up!"

Harvey nodded. "I'll try," he promised. "You're such a comfort, Willie! You're retained in the case, you know; and if you make good, you can get nearly any price you like to ask. Meanwhile, of course, you can draw for expenses. Don't spare money where it seems worth while."

"Thank you!" Willie nodded. "Now I want to ask you one question. I'm not going to trust any one in this business; and I want to ask you right out whether you feel sure of Doctor Stackpole?"

"Sure of him?" Harvey seemed not to understand.

"Yes! Sure of him! Half a million is a lot of money, and——"

"Oh! . . . Yes! I'm sure of him. I've known him for years; and I'll go bail for him. Oh, yes! Stackpole is all right. He's a bit of a fool. But he's a good doctor and he's honest. You don't suspect him, really?"

Willie shook her head. "Of course not," she answered. "I don't suspect anybody yet. It would be silly to suspect anybody before I knew more. I'm only inquiring." Miss Blunt got up. "Well!" she added. "I've got to hurry. I'm going to Rochpelle to interview the man who married Mr. Hurd—Maybury did you say his name was?"

CHAPTER III.

A WIRELESS CALL.

WILDLY elated, Willie Blunt started for Rochpelle. Every nerve in her body was tingling with excitement. At last she had a chance. And what a chance it was! If she could solve this riddle she would be "made," whatever the answer might be. Her triumph would win for her not merely the money of which she stood in need, but reputation among the very people where it would be most valuable. Work would come to her on all hands.

But it was not this that held the forefront in Willie's mind as she hurried toward the railway station. Memory of Fred Harvey's face and words had crowded other things to the background. He had kept his promise; he had given her a chance. More, he had done so where failure would mean ruin to himself.

Willie knew that he was right when he said that the directors of the Fidelity would not stand for any doubt in regard to a half-million loss. If convinced that it was fairly due they would pay it without a murmur. But if they thought it was a fraud and yet found themselves compelled to pay it, they would demand a scapegoat. And that scapegoat would be Fred Harvey. She must save him. He had put his future in her hands and she must make good. Afterwards—— But she refused to think of "afterwards;" afterwards could take care of itself.

At the railway station she caught a glimpse of Doctor Stackpole getting on board the same train as her own and shrank back, unwilling to let him see her. She did not really suspect him of any complicity in the swindle, if swindle there was; she did not really suspect any one as yet. But, she kept telling herself, neither must she trust any one, not even Fred Harvey himself. Half a million dollars was an enormous stake, one great enough to tempt an archangel. Of course, most men would resist the temptation; and most men would not dare to succumb to it. But given the opportunity and the requisite daring Willie doubted whether she herself would refuse. At any rate, her guiding principle, at least until she had learned something more as to the circumstances, must be to trust nobody.

Moreover, Doctor Stackpole had examined Hurd—or the man who pretended to be Hurd—and must be known to the conspirators, if conspirators there were. Consequently he would be a marked man, and he might very well be under observation. In that case any one in his company, especially any one going to Rochpelle with him, would undoubtedly fall under observation also; and it was the commonest prudence for her to avoid being identified with him.

Feeling thus, Willie took care to keep well out of sight on the train and at Rochpelle till the Doctor had inquired his way to the Hurd house and had departed. Then she inquired her own way and set off for Doctor Maybury's home.

She found it with little difficulty. Willie possessed naturally a marvelous faculty of finding her way about in strange places—a faculty which her newspaper training had developed to an almost uncanny degree.

The house was a comfortable-looking one, set, like all Rochpelle houses outside of the shopping district, in a good-sized lot with ground on all sides. Willie was a little surprised to see it. She had learned that Doctor Maybury was superannuated and retired. Evidently he had means of his own, or his congregation had done better by him than most parishes did by their superannuated ministers.

When Willie rang the bell the door was opened by a girl who was probably about 25 years old, but who might easily have passed for double that age. Probably she had been pretty once, for she had good features and abundance of soft brown hair. But agony—recent mental agony, Willie guessed—had seamed and lined her face, turning it into the similitude of a death's-head. Her eyes were red and swollen and sunken, as if washed out by floods of tears; and her cheeks were absolutely colorless, as if every last drop of blood had been drained from them. She did not speak. She only looked at Willie dully.

Nor did Willie speak for a moment. She was too shocked by the girl's appearance to find words. At last, however, she managed to gasp an inquiry, "Is Doctor Maybury at home?" she asked.

Slowly the girl nodded. "Yes," she answered. "Will you come in?"

Willie went in. But inside the door she paused. She guessed that this was Doctor Maybury's daughter, Linda, the girl whom "everybody," according to Fred Harvey, had expected Hurd to marry. Willie needed no divination to guess that her distress might well be due to the news of Hurd's sudden death. But, even so, it seemed exaggerated. Willie had seen sorrow again and again, and she was sure that it had taken something more than mere sorrow to cause the wreck she saw before her. Instantly she determined to take a chance.

"I represent the Fidelity Life Insurance Company of New York," she said. "Mr. Harry Hurd had a large policy with us, and I wanted to ask Doctor Maybury whether Mr. Hurd showed any signs of illness when he married him last Saturday evening?" As Willie spoke she watched the other closely.

She had her reward. At the first mention of Hurd the girl's frozen calm broke up. "Policy? Insurance?" she half shrieked. "You mean—you suspect—you think he was murdered—for that?"

Willie gasped. She had hoped for something, but not for anything like this. But she forced herself to answer calmly. "No—o," she said. "We don't suspect exactly. But the circumstances are a little curious, and we thought it best to look into them. Our examination so far is purely formal. No doubt everything is all right and——"

"No! No! Everything is not all right." Linda seemed transfigured. "Nothing is right. All is wrong. Harry was murdered—murdered! I know he was!"

"Good Heavens!" Willie gasped. This was information with a vengeance. "How do you know?"

"Because he wirelessed to me that he was being murdered."

"Wirelessed?" Miss Blunt's eyes distended and her lips shaped themselves into a silent whistle. Could the woman be mad? "Wirelessed you?" she repeated vaguely. "From Chicago?"

"No. From his home. Just before—or just after father married him."

"Just after——" Willie Blunt broke off. Clearly, she decided, the girl was mad. Much brooding over Hurd's sudden death had shattered her mind. The clew that her first words had promised dissolved away. But it was plain that she needed sympathy and probably medical attention; and Willie instinctively determined to give it. She had not been a newspaper woman for years without learning how great a relief it was to most women at times of mental stress, to talk their hearts out, even to a stranger. She would let this girl talk. Probably it would help her. Besides—the feeling was vague, but it was persistent—besides, she might say something that would be of value in the investigation of the case.

These reasons, and most of all pure human womanly sympathy, rang in her voice as she spoke. "Tell me all about it, if you like," she proffered. "Perhaps it will help you. I can talk to your father later."

Linda was more than willing. "Oh!" she cried. "You will listen to me! You will believe! I can't talk to father; he is too old, and it would make him too unhappy. And nobody else will believe me. Everybody I tell says that I was dreaming. They all look at me so queerly. But you—Oh! I know that you are a stranger, but—but—Come upstairs to my room. We can talk there." She turned and almost ran to the steps.

Willie followed, wondering what she was about to hear. Already she was beginning to revise her opinion as to Linda's mental aberration. Perhaps—just perhaps—— Eagerly she hurried up the stairs.

The room into which her hostess ushered her was good-sized and comfortable-looking. In the main it was like any other girl's room. One thing only was out of keeping with the rest. On a table at one side stood an apparatus of brass and steel and polished wood which Willie could not identify. Curiously she glanced at it.

Linda did not leave her long in perplexity. Almost instantly she flung out her hand. "There," she cried. "That is where I got the message."

"The message? The wireless, you mean? Is that a wireless outfit?"

"Yes. Harry gave it to me. His company makes them, you know. He gave it to me. Little he knew that one day he would send me tidings—tidings—Oh! My God! It can't be true. It can't be true."

Impulsively Willie ran to the frantic girl and then put her arms about her. "There! There!" she murmured. "Try to calm yourself. Maybe it isn't true after all. Few things are quite as bad as they seem at first. Talk it out, dear. It will make you feel better when you have put it all in words. Indeed it will." Willie had forgotten her own stake in the matter; she spoke only out of pure human sympathy.

For a moment Linda sobbed. Then she drew away. "Thank you," she murmured. "Thank you. That's the first word—the very first word of sympathy I've had. And it helps! Yes, it helps! I must be calm; else you'll be like the rest and think I am mad or dreaming, and will refuse to believe me. Yes! I must be calm. I must! I must! . . . Please sit down."

With a great effort the girl thrust [illegible] that had enveloped her. Almost [illegible] she pushed forward a chair. "Sit down, please," she begged. "I will talk calmly."

Willie nodded. "Of course you will," she said. "You're doing better every moment. It will be so much better if you can—for him." She glanced sharply tho cautiously at her hostess. She was certain that an unhappy love story lay behind the other's agitation. She knew, none better, how much fever there could be in a woman's sorrow.

Linda did not resent the implication, perhaps did not notice it. "No," she said, "not for him! Nothing can help him now. He is dead. But those who killed him shall suffer for it! That woman—she didn't love him. I know she didn't. She only wanted his money. And I—oh, yes! I loved him! I've loved him all my life. I love him now. But I was ashamed of it before, for—for he—he had never said that he loved me—never till that night. When I knew he was going to marry her I tried to cut my love out of my heart. But now—now that he's dead I can love him. And I'll avenge him. There is nobody else to do it. And he called to me for help, you know. I tried to give it. I failed. I couldn't save him. But I'll avenge him! I only want to know how—to know how!"

"Yes, dear, yes. You shall. Try to calm down and tell me all about it. I know how to go about such things. It's my business. But I can't help you unless you do, you know."

Linda nodded. For a moment she stared straight before her, as if seeing the vision of things that had been and of those that might have been but that could never be. Then, at last, she spoke, in curious level tones, which only once or twice rose in uncontrollable emotion.

"I've known Harry Hurd all my life," she said. "His people came to my father's church for years, and after they died Harry kept on coming. He was a good boy, Harry was, not a sissy or anything like that, but just good. He was a real boy and a real man always, but he was kind and generous and courteous and—and—— He and I were chums from babyhood. Father's parsonage was near the cemetery, only a block or two from the big Hurd place, and when Harry was a boy he was at our house more than he was at home. Later, father got so old and feeble and lost so much of his sight and hearing that he had to retire. Of course, he had to give up the parsonage, and we moved to this house, a good way off. But Harry didn't let distance interfere. He was over here all the time; and when he wasn't over he was wirelessing. He fixed up a station on his roof and one on ours, and he taught me the code and we used to talk back and forth for hours when conditions would permit. I got so I knew his 'sending' as well as I did his voice. I could pick it out of a thousand. When we grew up it was just the same. We were chums—just chums. Harry never said a word of love to me in all his life till—till that night, but—but—— Oh, I wasn't wrong! I wasn't! Harry did love me. He just didn't think. We were such good chums that he didn't think of anything more.

"About six months ago he went to England to sell wireless outfits. The Hurd Company makes wireless things, you know. While he was away he wrote to me all the time. A month ago he wrote that he was coming home soon, that he wanted to see me so bad that he couldn't stay away any longer—so bad that it hurt. He didn't really say in so many words that he was coming to ask me to marry him, but he said it indirectly. Oh, yes! He said it. And he meant it, too! He said that he would start back in a week if he possibly could. When I got his letter I was happier than I ever was in all my life before.

"But his letter had been delayed. All letters from Europe are in these days, you know. It had taken three weeks to reach me. And Harry came nearly as quickly as it did. Only two days later, when I was reading the paper to father—father's sight is pretty poor, you know—I saw Harry's name in an article naming prominent arrivals on the steamer Milwaukee from England. Right next to it were the names of Mr. Ferdinand de Nemours and Miss Corinne de Nemours, Belgian refugees. I noticed the names, but I didn't think anything of them then. Of course I didn't. I didn't think of any one but Harry.

"Of course I expected to see him or hear from him right away. But I didn't. Three days went by and he didn't come; he didn't write; he didn't telephone or wireless. I couldn't understand it. Then I heard that he had been to his house here and had put a lot of men at work renovating it and that he had told somebody he was going to bring a wife to it. Still I didn't understand. I couldn't understand. I—I thought he—he might mean me—that he was going to keep his return secret for a few days and then was going to surprise me and—and want me to marry him right away. Of course he would have been taking a lot for granted. But I shouldn't have minded. It was silly to think such things. I know that now. I suppose you can't understand because you don't know what chums we were." Imploringly Linda looked at Miss Blunt.

Impulsively Willie leaned forward and took the girl in her arms. "Yes! I do understand," she declared. "You were perfectly justified in thinking what you did. It was just the idiotic sort of thing a man would be likely to do. And just the crazy thing that we women are foolish enough to like them for doing! Men are such idiots, anyway."

Linda drew back a little. "Harry wasn't an idiot!" she protested angrily. "Harry was always clever and kind and knew what to do. It was that woman. She had got round him. I don't know how she did it, but she did. On the steamer coming over, I suppose. Harry never knew much about women; he was a shy boy and didn't run with girls. I was the only girl in Rochpelle he ever went near. She must have fascinated him somehow. Maybe she found out that he was rich—Oh! I know what you think. I know it sounds as if I was just jealous and trying to say bad things about her. But it isn't. I didn't think bad things about her at first, even after I knew Harry was going to marry her. It was afterwards——

"A letter came from Harry at last—a letter to father. It came Friday last. I got it from the postman, and of course I knew the writing and I took it to father thinking—thinking that it might be—but it wasn't! Father asked me to read it to him. It was nice and pleasant and friendly, but it said that—that he supposed that I had told father that he was going to be married to Mademoiselle Corinne de Nemours, a Belgian lady—a war refugee—whom he had met abroad, and that he wanted his old friend to perform the ceremony. It was to be at his house on Saturday night—the very next night. That was all!

"A letter came for me the next morning—Saturday. Oh, yes! Harry had written, of course. The postmark was twenty-four hours earlier than that on father's letter. It ought to have come sooner, but you know how the mails are around New York——"

Miss Blunt threw up her hands. "Yes, I know how the mails are around New York," she concurred. "It takes longer to get a letter from New York to a place twenty miles away than it does to get it 200 miles. And mix-ups! It's always been so, and I suppose it always will. But it was cruel that it should be so in your case."

Linda smiled drearily. "It didn't matter much," she said. "Harry said about the same in his letter to me, and he added that 'Corinne' was the most wonderful woman he had ever known, and that he was sure I would love her. He took two pages to tell me that."

"Oh! Men are fools."

This time Linda did not deny the imputation. "He wanted me to come to the wedding with father. He said that he had told her about me and that she was crazy to meet me, but that she couldn't do it till the night of the wedding, for she would be tremendously occupied. So he wanted me to come with father Saturday night and meet her and welcome her to Rochpelle and—and—he said he knew we would love each other."

"Oh!"

"I couldn't go. I simply couldn't. Maybe I could have if I had had two or three days' grace. But I couldn't right away like that. The wedding was to be that very night. I simply couldn't. So I told father I had a headache and when the car came for him I let him go alone. And so—and so——

"I'll never forgive myself for it—never! If I had gone Harry might—would have been—alive this day. Father was too old to guess that something was wrong. But I would have guessed it and—and—but now it's too late—it's too late."

For a moment the girl's frame shook with dry sobs; then she pulled herself together. "Half an hour later," she went on, "I was sitting here by the wireless, listening. I thought—Oh! You know what I thought. Any woman would think the same. It made it a little less hard to bear to sit by it. Harry had built the thing, you know. I was listening——

"And then the call came. It was Harry calling. I knew instantly that it was he. I knew it was. I know it now. I knew his touch just as well as you know your own writing. I didn't answer at once. I thought he wanted to say something about the wedding. And I couldn't bear it. But he kept on calling 'Lin! Lin! Lin!' and at last I answered. And then his message came thru the air. 'Thank God!' he called. 'Oh! Thank God you're there. It was all a mistake, Linda, a horrible mistake. It was you I loved all the time. Only you, Linda. And now it's too late. They are going to murder me, Linda; murder me! Help! Help! Oh, for God's sake, help! He——' The sounder ceased.

"I clutched the key. I begged. I implored. I shrieked thru the spaces of the air. But no answer came. None ever came. None will ever come, ever again.

"For minutes I sat at the key, calling, calling. Then I realized that Harry was being murdered. He had called to me for help. And I, fool that I was, was sitting still, wasting precious moments—

"I jumped up. I ran down the stairs and out of the house. Harry's house was two miles away. There were no trolley cars that would serve. But there was a garage near. I ran to it. The proprietor was standing at the entrance. He had just got out of a runabout. I could hear the motor still throbbing. I had no time to explain. But I knew the proprietor. So I just waved my hand to him and jumped into the car and threw in the clutch and darted away.

"I don't know how I got to Harry's without killing myself or some one else. I know I grazed suicide and assassination a dozen times. But at last I got there. By the mercy of God I got there—without hurting any one. And then, just as I was about to turn in at the gate, a big touring car came tearing out and shot off up the road—away from me. I didn't know who was in it. I guessed that it might be Harry's murderers escaping. But my little car could never overtake a monster fleeing as that one did. And it would do me no good to overtake them. I could not stop them. And I did not want to stop them. I wanted to get to Harry. So I turned in at the gate and fled up the drive toward the house.

"Then suddenly the lights of another car flashed in my eyes. It was almost on me. There was no room to pass it. So I tried to stop. The other car tried, too. We succeeded—almost. We jarred together, but did no harm, nothing to hurt. I heard the chauffeur cursing and I leaned out, and behind him I saw father's face peering out at me. I ran to him. 'Father,' I called. 'Where is Harry? Where have they put him?' Father stared at me. He knew my voice even if he could not see my face in the semi-darkness. 'Linda!' he exclaimed. 'You here? What is the matter? Why—'

"But I would not listen. 'Harry! Harry!' I clamored. 'Where is he?'

"Father understood then. 'Harry,' he echoed. 'Oh! yes! You're too late to wish him joy, Linda. They're gone.'

"'Gone?' I suppose I was stupid.

"'Yes. They are in the car that's just ahead of us.'

"I could not understand it. 'You're sure?' I questioned.

"'Of course. I threw an old shoe after them myself. It wasn't very dignified for a minister, but, bless my soul, I've known the boy since he was a wee baby and——'

"I could not stand it. 'But—but it can't be true, father,' I protested. 'It can't be. Harry is in danger, distress. He just called to me over the wireless and begged for help. He——'

"'What?' Father reached out his hand and patted me on the shoulder. He understood at last that I was terribly excited. 'Why, girlie,' he said, 'you're wrong, all wrong. Harry couldn't have called you up in the last half hour, anyway, for he hasn't really been out of my presence for that long and longer. He's all right, girlie, and happy as they make 'em. You must have been dreaming—— Oh, yes, of course. Here's something for you. All my wedding fees belong to you, you know. This time it's twenty dollars—in gold. Harry gave it to me himself. Happy! Of course he's happy. But I wish you had come in time to wish him joy and to meet the bride. She is very lovely and very pleasant. Oh, yes, of course he's happy.'"

Linda's voice sagged wearily. The excitement that had sustained her was failing. But after a moment she went on drearily. "So I let father take me home. What else could I do? Nothing! Harry had gone—gone with his bride. My own father testified to it. Almost I believed that I had really dreamed that wild call for help. And yet I knew that I had not dreamed it.

"The night went by—somehow. A dreary day followed and another and drearier night. And then—then—on Monday morning I picked up the paper and saw—this." She held out a clipping that Willie recognized. "That was two days ago. I think I have been half mad for those two days. I cannot bear it any longer. I must find some one who will believe in me—some one who will help me punish Harry's murderers. And now you come, already suspicious. Will you help me? Can you help me? Oh! Tell me you will help me!"

"You poor thing!" Willie gathered the other in her arms. "Of course I'll help you. Or no! You shall help me! The Fidelity does suspect that something is wrong. It sent me down to find out what I could. If you'll help me we'll learn the truth, and if murder has been done we'll bring it home to those who did it."

This mysterious story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very strange happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once. It costs you only $1.00. Be wise and attend to this today.

* * *

GATHER YOUR ROSES NOW.

But yesterday a rose, full blown,
  Smiled sweetly at me as I passed.
I would have plucked it for my own,
  But for the thought: its charms will last.

Tomorrow I shall pass this way
  And I shall pause a moment then
And yonder rose shall cheer my day
  And make me happiest of men.

Today bowed down by grief and care,
  I wandered forth to seek the bloom;
And found it dead and withered there,
  Shorn of its beauty and perfume.

Rush not so heedless on your way,
  Stop your mad haste, oh, foolish man;
Earth's pleasures for you will not stay,
  So pluck your roses when you can.

* * *

Quieting the Baby.

She sat on the rear seat of a Troost car, the other afternoon, her stiffly starched blue calico dress half covered by a great white apron with three hemstitched tucks across the hem and flowing strings, proclaiming her to be a genuine relic, a "befo' de wah" mammy. Her tightly braided hair was slipping out from under what she would have called her "green baize haid wrop," and beside her on the seat was a new splint basket overflowing with freshly ironed clothes.

On the seat in front of her sat a young matron, holding in her arms a fretful, whimpering baby which she was faithfully trying to hold "scientifically." But the baby continued to cry and the mother continued to "hold its body straight, head up, and as free from the mother's body as possible," just as she had read in the latest edition of "Hand Picked Rules for Mothers of Infants," written by Miss Amelia Browning, but try as she would, she could not comfort the sleepy child.

The car bumped over a switch and the baby let out a louder wail than ever. Then mammy acted. She reached over the little mother's shoulder and with never a word took into her own arms a baby she had never seen before in her life. As she settled back on her seat she held the sobbing little mite doubled up at a most unheard of "unscientific" angle, its little face buried on her broad old shoulder, and its body humped up in a sort of lump on her billowy bosom.

As she rocked back and forth she was humming a song no one ever heard before, or ever will again, for it was entirely original and impromptu, and had to do with "mothers that didn't know how to hold a little lamb, nohow, and now to hush right up and go to sleep, 'cause mammy'd held lots and lots of little chilluns, and she wasn't goin' to let the po' little chil' cry no mo', no mo'."

And with fine scorn for the amused faces about her she jogged back and forth, and hummed and cuddled, while the wails dropped to sleepy little sobs and then to tired little grunts that trailed off into nothingness as the little head pressed closer and closer to the blue calico shoulder.

At 41st street the sleeping baby was placed in the mother's arms and mammy turned to the conductor:

"Heah," she snorted, "let me off, will you? I've gone ten blocks past my co-neh now."

A Judge's Mistake

Or, The Wrong Trail

By Annie Brownlee Quimby

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CHAPTER VI.

DID you know our new groom had arrived, daddy?" Marion asked, as they were seated at a late luncheon, the following day.

"Yes, puss, I know he has. Have you seen him yet? Does he come up to your expectations of what a groom should be?" the Judge asked with a mock-serious air.

"Yes, to both of your questions, daddy. I am going to be real fond of the new groom."

"Which means that you are going to wind him around your finger, and have your own way about the horses, eh?"

"What a shrewd guesser you are, daddy dear. Yes, Robert and I will get along very well, I believe."

"I hope, dear, that you will not ride that wild animal again," Mrs. Gray said to Marion, who lowered her eyes, but made no reply. "I trust you will see to it, James, that the new groom has strict orders about Dixie? Marion must not ride him again. It is too dangerous to ride such a vicious animal. Jane is a lady's horse."

"Don't be alarmed, dear. The new groom has his orders, and he will not dare disobey them, even to please Miss Puss here."

"Marion is so willful and impulsive you never know what mischief she will be up to," the mother complained.

"Do you hear that, puss?" her father asked.

"Yes, but mamma doesn't mean a word of it. She wouldn't have me other than I am for the world. Honor bright! Now would you?" The girl laughed mischievously at her mother.

"Marion, are you never going to grow up? Will you always be a child?" the little mother chided. "There is Dorothy Briggs, now. See how dignified and ladylike she is, and she is just your age."

"Dorothy never was a child, mother; she was always a grownup. At 10 she wouldn't play marbles for fear she might soil her dress or scrape her toes." Marion laughed. "I was always happiest when dirtiest. Dorothy wouldn't dare make mud pies, you know; but it was lots of fun just the same."

"Leave her alone, mother," the Judge interposed. "Let her be a little girl as long as she can. She'll be a woman long enough afterward." And he patted the girl's hand.

"What have you done with Mr. Orton, papa?" Marion asked. "Have you found something for him to do?"

"I have done nothing with your Mr. Orton, Puss. He is to call again this afternoon, and I intend offering him some sort of place in the office."

"Didn't I hear you say you needed a secretary?"

"Yes, but I couldn't think of offering that position to a stranger. That is a position of great trust and responsibility, my dear," the Judge explained.

"I know, but I think Mr. Orton would prove equal to the position. Do you know, papa, he always gives me the impression of a man with a purpose in life," Marion observed seriously.

"Little wiseacre! What do you know about men or the world?"

"Not much, perhaps. But what I know, I know pretty thoroly."

"I believe you do, puss. But the secretaryship will have to wait a while," the Judge laughed.

"But you will find him something? It must be terrible to be without funds and unable to get employment."

The laughing eyes had suddenly grown very sober and grave.

"It is very terrible, dear—more terrible than you can possibly understand. If the great reform wave that is sweeping our State would truly reform, let them begin by helping the needy. There is nothing that will make a criminal of a man so quickly as necessity. A man who has only himself to consider may beg, and maintain body and soul. But the man who has a wife and children dependent upon him will steal before he will see them starve. The law will punish him—must punish him—but the heart cannot condemn."

"Why, papa, I never heard you talk like that before."

"Perhaps not, dear, but I feel that way, nevertheless."

Judge Gray's one great ambition in life was true reform—not the kind that drives hundreds into crime, but the kind that helps them to keep out.

Promptly at half-past 2 o'clock that afternoon Wesley walked up the steps of the courthouse—the place where wrongs are supposed to be adjusted—and found his way into Judge Gray's office.

"You say you have no real experience in office work?" Judge Gray inquired.

"No actual experience in the kind of work you would require, sir."

"Yet I believe your education has not been neglected?"

"Not exactly neglected. You see, I first thought of entering the law business, and to that end, I took one year in the legal department of the University of California. Reverses came, and I was compelled to drop my studies. I have, however, had a thoro course in a business college. I am qualified for anything in that line."

"I see! Well, I guess you are qualified to undertake anything I have to offer. When you once become familiar with your duties you will get along all right."

"I hope so," was the prompt reply.

"Have you parents living?" the Judge questioned.

"No, they—they are dead," Wesley faltered.

"I see! Have you always lived in San Francisco?"

"No; I was brought up on a ranch in the northern part of the State. Recently I lost both parents and home," he replied half falteringly.

"I see!" the Judge remarked for the third time. It was a favorite expression of his.

"You will report for duty then at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning?" The elder man rose, indicating that the interview was at an end.

"Has your honor considered that I have no references to offer?" Wesley asked a little nervously. He wished to to be sure of his position.

"Don't worry over that, my boy. I should hardly ask the man who has been of such inestimable service to my family for references as I should a common stranger. Then, as you have never held a position you would scarcely be armed with such things," he added good-naturedly.

"I thank you, sir, and I appreciate the trust you have placed in me. I did not care to sail under false colors. I wanted you to know that I had no references to offer."

"It's all right, young man. I'll take you on trust. I like your face, and I believe it is honest."

"I will try to live up to your high opinion of me, sir," Wesley replied, a peculiar sensation in his heart.

The remainder of the afternoon was a busy one for him. He found that the distance was too great to walk from his present lodgings, so he decided to secure room and board near his work and save car fare. Fortunately, Judge Gray had advanced a week's salary, anticipating such an event, so he had no difficulty in securing desirable quarters. By 6 o'clock he was comfortably settled in a clean, homelike room near Sacramento street, and was nearer happy than he had been for the last three years.

All afternoon he kept thinking of Marion, for it was thru her that he had found his present good fortune.

"Will I see her sometimes?" he wondered. "How brave she was the other day! There is no silly shyness or nonsense about her. She was just plain natural. Didn't faint, either, when her horse ran away. Most girls would have gone into hysterics and screamed their heads off, and I never would have got the devilish little mare quiet. But she didn't, and that proves she has more brains than the average."

Wesley retired early, but sleep did not come so readily. As he lay staring ceilingward thru the dark, serious and conflicting thoughts kept rioting thru his brain. There in the dark, he vowed that his future should be free from crime, and that with God's help he would lead a good and useful life, and perhaps in the years to come the ghost of the past would fade away. Perhaps he might even settle down to a respectable married life.

Then a vision of Marion floated before him, and he shook his head sadly. Still thinking of her he fell asleep, and dreamed that Dixie was running away again, and that he was in pursuit. A dozen times he was on the point of grasping the reins, when she would dart away like an arrow from the bow. Finally he succeeded in getting hold of the reins. They were on the edge of a precipice and he held on with might and main, but to no avail. They went over together, down, down!

The sound of his own voice awoke him. The perspiration stood on his brow, and he had grasped the coverlet as tho life depended on a strong and mighty hold. The dream had been so real and vivid that it left him weak. But he wiped the perspiration from his brow, and with a relieved smile turned over and went to sleep.

CHAPTER VII.

WESLEY'S first month in Judge Gray's employ passed like a dream. The work was congenial, his employer always pleasant and considerate, and he had twice seen Marion. Each time she spoke with him for a few minutes, and somehow it seemed to him that she did not treat him quite as she did the others in his station of life. The sight of her and the sound of her voice gave him an inspiration for days to come.

At the end of six months Judge Gray was still without a secretary. Gradually Wesley had begun to do the work. There had been no understanding, nothing definite was said, but his duties had become more and more of a private nature. His salary had been raised, and he was now drawing a fair income.

Judge Gray had watched him closely, and the boy's earnest sincerity and close application to duty had won his esteem. No duties seemed too arduous for the new clerk, no hours too long. If, as sometimes happened, there was extra work to do, it was done cheerfully and without thought of self, and his honesty had been repeatedly proved.

One day as Wesley was returning from an important errand for the Judge, he met Marion mounted on Jane, and accompanied by a groom. They were leaving the courthouse. Evidently the young woman had been paying her father a visit. Seeing Wesley, she reined in her mount close to the curb, and the groom fell in behind her.

"Good morning, Mr. Orton. I missed you from the office."

"Good morning, Miss Gray." For the life of him he could not think of anything further to say.

"I have just been to the office and quarreled with papa," the girl went on, with a pretty pout.

"Not seriously, I hope?" And Wesley smiled.

"Well, not seriously, perhaps, but I am terribly disappointed. You see, mamma and I always set aside a day each year for visiting each public institution. We had planned to visit San Quentin tomorrow, and have asked some friends to accompany us. Papa always accompanies us on these yearly visits, but it appears there is some tiresome legal affair on the docket, and he can't get away."

Had she been looking at him, she would have been surprised at the sudden pallor of his face. But when he spoke his voice was calm and steady.

"Can't your visit be postponed for a few days, Miss Gray? San Quentin will be there a week or a month hence." He smiled at her.

"Of course it will; but I am too unreasonable to see it that way. I have no patience with disappointments. If we don't go tomorrow, as planned, we will be unable to go this week. Every day is taken up with something or other."

To emphasize her irritation she brought her riding whip down sharply on the inoffensive Jane's ears, and made that staid old mare do the turkey trot.

Marion was indeed in an unreasonable mood, and was too unreasonable to care very much. Jane knew her mistress was subject to periodical fits of temper, and her horse sense told her that the more she pranced and side-stepped, the more Marion would jerk and pull, and the quicker the mood would wear away. She knew that for every blow there would be several lumps of sugar, and a dozen remorseful hugs. So she did not mind in the least, only human-like she had to pretend.

When Marion had finally brought Jane to a stand beside the curb again, she stole a glance at Wesley's face. It was noncommittal.

"Why don't you relieve your mind, Mr. Orton, and tell me what a wretch I am?" she cried defiantly. "But I feel better already, and Jane doesn't mind."

"I have no right to censure you, Miss Gray. If it relieves your feelings, why——"

"Why, it's none of your business." Her sarcasm was tempered by a mischievous smile. "I'll be feeling better by the time I reach home. Good-by." And touching Jane lightly with the whip, she trotted briskly down the street.

So intent was Wesley upon watching the girlish figure that he failed to notice the groom, until that individual drew up in front of him and stopped

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with the pretext of adjusting his stirrup strap.

"Hope you are well, Jack?" the latter said quietly.

Wesley wheeled and cast a searching glance at the groom.

"Bob!" he cried. "What a start you gave me!"

"Surprised to see me, eh? Well, I'm Judge Gray's new groom," the other explained.

"And I'm Judge Gray's new clerk." Wesley laughed. Then, in a lower tone: "Jack Rainer is dead. It's Wesley Orton whom you see before you. Catch on?"

"Sure, Mr. Orton! Mum is the word! Good-by." And with a gesture of secrecy he was off to overtake his charge, who was almost a block away.

It was a very thoughtful young man who entered Judge Gray's office a few minutes later. Somehow or other the mention of the old prison had disturbed his peace. The shadow of San Quentin hung dark over his soul and fear gripped him mercilessly.

"Kindly step into my private office for a moment, Mr. Orton." It was Judge Gray who spoke, as he paused beside Wesley's desk.

The young man evinced no surprise, for the request was a common one.

"Have a seat, Mr. Orton," the Judge said pleasantly, as Wesley paused by the door, waiting for further orders. "That's right. Now we can talk more comfortably. How would you like to be my private secretary, Mr. Orton?"

"I should like it very much, sir, but I fear I have not the necessary qualifications for the position," the young man replied.

"Qualifications nothing! You have been occupying the position the last six months, only you didn't know it. Had you not been blind, you could have seen that the work of the other clerks was very different from yours." An amused smile played about the Judge's firm lips.

"If I have been of real service to you, I am glad of it, sir." Wesley's eyes sparkled with keen satisfaction.

"You have been of such valuable service to me that I am going to make you my private secretary—that is, if you care to accept the position. I know of no one who can fill it better than you. Is it a go?" The Judge smiled in almost a fatherly way at the young man.

"It is, sir. I can't tell you how much I appreciate your trust in me. It has helped me more than you can ever understand." Wesley's voice sank almost to a whisper.

"Wesley Orton, you have one fault for which I should like to pommel you well, and that is a complete lack of self-appreciation," the Judge cried. "You sometimes impress me as one feeling his way, as it were—trying to live down something, or forget. Is there something in the past that you don't care to remember, my boy? Don't be afraid to confide in me. I may be able to help you."

Wesley was on the point of confessing all to the Judge, when it suddenly flashed over him whose verdict had sent him to San Quentin.

"Perhaps there are some things in the past I should like to forget," he said thoughtfully. "There are few, I believe, who have not something they would like to erase from their memory if possible."

"You are right. The best of our lives have some plague spots in them. I should not have spoken as I did."

"You were quite right, sir. Your impression was correct. I am, in a way, groping in the dark, trying to live down the past."

Their eyes met for an instant, but the young man's were steady and honest.

"I will ask only one question, my boy. Is Orton your real name?"

"Yes. I was christened John Wesley Orton."

"It's all right then. So long as you are sailing under your own canvas there can't be anything radically wrong. If it is friends, forget them. You are not morally responsible for the whole family, you know."

"Thank you. The kindness shown me while in your employ has certainly helped me to forget."

"Very well, then, we will get to business at once," the Judge cried briskly. "In future you will occupy this desk when working in the office, but a great deal of your time will be spent at the desk in my study at home. Practically all of my private affairs are looked after there. All valuable papers and large sums of money which come in too late to be deposited in the bank are kept in the vault there. Some day I will teach you the combination. No one knows it but myself. I sometimes find it very inconvenient. If, for instance, a paper is forgotten, I must return for it myself."

Wesley bowed. He was wondering what the Judge would say if he should suddenly remember who it was he was placing in such a position of trust. And Marion—he would see her almost daily, perhaps several times a day.

"The position of private secretary will include your room and board," the Judge explained. "There is a small room on the second floor which will be at your disposal, and you will take your meals with the family when guests are not present. Your salary will be——" he mentioned a sum that made the young man's eyes open wide with wonder.

"You are certainly generous, sir," Wesley replied.

"Not generous; only just. It is the usual salary, no more. If everything is satisfactory you may as well move into your new quarters this afternoon. I will telephone Mrs. Gray to have your room ready."

CHAPTER VIII.

BY 6 O'CLOCK Wesley was comfortably settled in his new home. He had not seen Marion yet, but he had a vague sort of feeling that he owed his sudden advancement as much to her friendly interference as he did to his own personal merits.

He was arranging the desk in the study to his satisfaction—for he was an orderly soul—when Judge Gray entered.

"That's right; getting acquainted, I see."

"I thought I might as well get things in shape for tomorrow's work. I like to know where to find things without having to stop and look them up," Wesley replied, placing pens and blotters at a convenient angle.

The Judge surveyed the neat, orderly desk with approval.

"Your bump of order is well developed, Orton."

"Just normally so. I find it difficult to do good work with a littered desk," Wesley replied. "Where there are too many objects for the eye to rest on, concentration is difficult."

"Oh, by the way, Orton, I must ask you to do me a favor, tomorrow, that is somewhat out of the usual routine of a secretary's duty," the Judge began.

A sudden fear grasped Wesley's heart for a moment. He knew instinctively that the favor asked would bring him within the shadow of the past. He could hear the Judge's voice as in a dream, saying:

"The ladies, with a couple of friends, had planned to visit San Quentin prison tomorrow. I always accompany them on such visits—not that I care to see the poor wretches I have sent there—but that Hartney case comes up tomorrow, and I cannot get away. I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind escorting the ladies."

"It will give me great pleasure to oblige you, sir. At what hour do the ladies wish to start?" Wesley turned that the other might not see the pallor of his face.

"I believe they wish to start about 10 o'clock. The matron of the prison usually invites them to remain for lunch," the Judge explained.

"I will do my best, but I have a feeling that I will prove a poor escort. If it had been the opera, now, or a ball."

The Judge laughed.

"Yes, that would have been more interesting; but sometimes a good cigar and quiet nook will make a bad situation almost pleasant. I never attempt to visit the prisoners. I have no heart to see them in their unfortunate position, and they certainly don't care to see me." He smiled wryly. "What is it, Orton? You're looking rather white about the gills."

"It's nothing, sir. I feel better now. The room was rather close, that's all." Going to the window he threw up the sash and leaned out.

The fog had rolled in from the Pacific, enveloping every tree and shrub, but the cool, damp air fell gratefully upon his face. The salt in the air was exhilarating, and after a few bracing whiffs he closed the window. He was himself again.

Judge Gray watched Wesley narrowly, and again that perplexed feeling returned. What was there about the man that kept coming back to him? It was a puzzle he could not solve. There was always something just beyond.

Wesley retired to his room early. He wanted to be alone so he could think. Surely fate was playing a hard game.

He stood before the mirror a long while, studying his face from different angles. The luxuriant growth of hair which now adorned his head changed the aspect of his face somewhat. But was it sufficiently changed to allow him to return to San Quentin without danger of detection? His well-tailored clothes would help him out immeasurably. Then a happy thought struck him. A few shades added to his chestnut hair, together with darkened eyebrows, would work a miraculous change in his appearance. Then he would pay a visit to a dentist and see the result. The idea relieved him immensely. The change could be effected without being too radical to surprise or arouse suspicion in his employer's household.

At 10:30 the next morning the big touring car pulled up before the door, with Bob at the wheel—he acted as chauffeur as well as groom—and the party were soon aboard a ferryboat and slipping across the bay.

As the guard admitted them to the prison grounds, Wesley's disguise was put to a severe test. The guard was a burly Irishman with immense shoulders and a thick, bullish neck. He scrutinized them closely, and after securely closing the gate, took another sharp, puzzled look at Wesley, but he passed them all on readily enough.

They met the warden just outside the prison, and he received them cordially. The ladies were personally known to him, as their visit was a regular yearly occurrence.

"We were so sorry my husband could not accompany us today, but he was unavoidedly detained," Mrs. Gray explained in her sweet, motherly voice. "Had it not been for the kindness of Mr. Orton in consenting to escort us today, I fear our visit would have been indefinitely postponed."

"I am sorry Judge Gray could not accompany you today. But I am sure Mr. Orton must appreciate the very enviable position he occupies; and unless I am mistaken you have found him a very capable escort," the warden replied, feeling duty bound to say something pleasant.

"A most delightful escort, indeed," Mrs. Gray assented, glancing with approval at Wesley's broad shoulders and clear-cut, honest face. "In fact, Mr. Orton has proved such an excellent escort that I am tempted to thank a kind providence for keeping the Judge at home." The laugh that followed was hearty and genuine.

"It is very kind of you to say that, Mrs. Gray, but I have a presentiment that I will prove a very unsatisfactory escort in our mission this afternoon. In mercy to the ladies, I believe I shall turn them over to you, sir. You will prove a much more interesting escort than I, and a very pleasant and capable one, if I am not mistaken." Thus Wesley addressed the warden.

"I can see that papa has been coaching you," Marion cried, and they all laughed again.

The warden looked puzzled.

"Have we ever met before, Mr. Orton?" he asked. "There is something familiar about you. It is not your face; it must be your voice. Where have I heard that voice before?" He drew his hand thoughtfully across his eyes, studying hard.

"I think you must be mistaken. This is my first visit to San Quentin, and I can't recollect having met you unofficially," the young man carelessly replied.

It was a critical moment for Wesley, and every fiber of his body was quivering. Marion, too, was looking at him in a peculiar way. Then he suddenly remembered his hair and eyebrows, and the elaborate display of gold in his teeth.

For a moment all eyes were focused upon Wesley, but he stood it as calmly as tho nothing were at stake. If Marion would only remain silent! The other members of the party were not sufficiently acquainted with his appearance to note the change.

"No doubt you have heard many voices that resemble Mr. Orton's. I have, I know," broke in a little old lady, who was bubbling over with the popular prison reform ideas.

The compliment was a doubtful one, but Wesley could have embraced her for it. It relieved the tension of the moment, and took the warden's thoughts from him, for the time at least.

"You public men hear so many voices, I should think it would be difficult to keep them from becoming confused," Mrs. Gray remarked.

"Sometimes it is, madam, and again, some voices carry remembrance with them."

"Just as some personalities affect us more than others, I suppose," the little reform lady broke in again.

"Exactly, madam!" the warden replied.

By this time they had reached the main entrance, and the warden was conducting them to the matron's sitting-room in the women's department.

"Would it be violating any of the prison rules, sir, were I to enjoy a cigar out here?" Wesley asked, remembering the Judge's advice.

"Not at all. Make yourself quite comfortable."

The party passed on, but not before Wesley had caught Marion's eyes fixed upon him with a peculiar searching look.

"Suffering saints!" he thought. "If she should once become suspicious, a word might ruin all!"

And he actually began to tremble, while wild thoughts of concealment flashed thru his brain. But the fear passed as quickly as it came. He must not draw attention to himself by seeming to evade it. A bold front and a pleasing manner were his greatest assets at this time. What had he to fear, anyway? He had passed the guard at the gate, and the warden had not recognized him. Surely he was safe now!

His cigar was finished; he cast it aside, and with a careless, confident air ascended the prison steps. An attendant conducted him to the matron's sitting-room, where the ladies were having a light lunch.

"Ah! The truant returns!" Marion cried. "I began to think you had deserted us, Mr. Orton. I am afraid you are having a rather bad time of it." She laughed playfully.

Wesley shot her a quick, startled glance. Was it just innocent girlish chatter, or was there something concealed in the words? Her face told him nothing.

"It is a poor soldier who deserts his country in time of war, Miss Gray," he replied lightly.

She smiled and beckoned him out on the porch.

"Who would ever think to look at this peaceful place that hundreds of criminals were herded here?" she began. Then, when out of earshot of the others, she laughed softly and glanced at his hair. "What made you do such a silly thing, Mr. Orton? I gave you credit for more sense."

Wesley took off his hat and ran his fingers thru the thick wavy hair, that was now almost black. He looked confused.

"Well, you see it was this way, Miss Gray. My barber discovered a—a few gray hairs, and recommended a mild color bath. He—he must have got it too strong." He paused for a moment; she was still smiling. "It—it is almost black, isn't it?"

"Yes, almost black; and you look so funny. I scarcely recognized you. Do you know, I wanted to laugh all the way over, but didn't dare. It's too funny." She laughed till her eyes grew misty. "You must excuse me for laughing, Mr. Orton. I really couldn't help it," she added teasingly.

"I don't mind in the least. I deserve it," he replied lightly, but her words gave him courage.

"But the eyebrows—were they gray, too?"

"They had to be sacrificed to the hair." And he laughed also. "I hope you won't subject me to a just ridicule by drawing your friends' attention to my pitiful condition," he pleaded.

"I ought to, Mr. Orton. I really ought to. It is too good to let pass. And I thought you had no vanity."

But he knew she would not. There was something about her that puzzled him, yet gave him confidence. His heart thrilled strangely as he watched her; and was it fancy, or did her eyes droop, and a sweet, subtle something steal over her face?

While traversing one of the prison corridors on their visit of inspection to the different parts of the prison, they several times encountered a tall, dark man, with eyes that seemed to creep when they looked at you directly—eyes that gave you the feeling of a serpent winding thru tall grass.

"What peculiar-[illegible] eyes!" Marion remarked. "Who [illegible] he be, I wonder? I'm going to ask the warden."

"I think he must hold some official position in connection with the prison; otherwise we would hardly be seeing so much of him," Wesley replied, and his voice sounded a little queer, but Marion was too interested in the stranger to notice it.

A few minutes later they came upon the stranger again. Wesley slackened his pace, casually removed his hat, ran

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his fingers thru his thick black hair, and looked utterly bored. The other slackened his pace also, covertly watching Wesley, but not seeming to do so.

"Have a light, friend?" Wesley remarked, extending a cigar. "It will help pass the time," he remarked, and his voice was richer and fuller and had a new tone. Again Marion was puzzled.

"Thanks! I was just wishing for a weed." The other took the proffered cigar. "Visitors, I presume?" he remarked carelessly.

Marion had gone slowly on with the rest of the party.

"Yes, I am escorting Judge Gray's wife and daughter, and a couple of friends on their annual visit to the prison."

At the mention of Judge Gray, the man shot a quick glance at Wesley.

"Was the young lady Miss Marion Gray?"

"Yes; and the delicate-looking lady in the black silk is her mother."

Wesley removed the cigar from his lips, flicked off the ash, and studied the glowing end for a minute; then he slowly replaced it between his lips.

"A friend of Judge Gray's, I presume?" the man asked, lowering the queer eyes for a minute.

"I have the honor to be the Judge's private secretary," was the seemingly careless reply.

"Ah!" There was surprise, and Wesley thought a little disappointment in the voice.

"You are to be envied, young man, if your duties include playing escort to such a pretty girl as Miss Gray." And the snaky eyes seemed to creep more than ever.

"Today is an exception. The Judge is very much engaged these days. I am here at his urgent request. Not that I object in the least, however." His smile was peculiarly boyish.

"I should think not!" The man flicked the ash from his cigar. "Have you seen all the points of interest about the prison, Mr. ——?" Then paused.

"My name is Orton," Wesley replied, in precisely the same tone of voice he had formerly used. "To be quite candid, I take very little interest in prison affairs."

The other laughed, but did not introduce himself.

"One of the ladies of your party seemed greatly interested in prison reform work," he went on. "I overheard her tell the warden her ideas of reforms, and how they should be carried out."

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Angus. That's her particular hobby."

"There are some interesting characters in the mechanical department. Perhaps you would like to go thru it?"

Wesley consulted his watch and considered a minute.

"I think not. The ladies will be going in a short time, and it would scarcely do to keep them waiting."

The one thing he wished to avoid, if possible, was meeting his old pals. They were keen-eyed, and might detect what the warden and the guards had failed to see.

Wesley Orton had a vague idea that the man with the queer eyes was not exactly what he seemed—a visitor.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it, and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

THE LOST SUITCASE.

"What's the trouble, old man—bad news in your letter?" asked Pedlow.

"Huh!" Dalton stared uncomprehendingly.

"I say, is there bad news in your letter? You look dazed."

"My wife went away yesterday morning to visit her folks," muttered Dalton.

"I know; but you knew all about that yesterday."

"Of course. Doggone it, anyhow."

"Gee! She isn't coming back already, is she?"

"No, it isn't that. I'm always playing jokes on her, and——"

"I should think the first joke you played on her would have satisfied you and then you'd have stopped bothering her."

"I don't believe I remember that first joke. Did I tell you about it?"

"Everybody knows about it. I think there was an account of it published in the newspapers at the time."

"An account of it published? You have got me mixed up with some one else."

"No, I haven't. The paper said the victim—I mean the bride—wore——"

"Gee, but you're funny! I expect we'll lose you when the vaudeville season gets to going right."

"Well, what was the joke on your wife this time?"

"Why, you know, I went to the station with her to see her off."

"To make sure she was gone? You're a sly dog!"

"She wanted to get some postcards and stamps while we were waiting for the train, so when she was at the news stand I took her suitcase and sneaked it into one of the telephone booths. Then when she came back she handed me the postcards to hold while she went into the woman's parlor to fix her hair and powder her nose. When she came out we sat and talked until nearly train time."

"Didn't she miss her suitcase?"

"No. But when it was nearly time for her to get on the train I suggested that we go out to it. Then when we started I asked her where her suitcase was."

"I suppose she went straight up in the air like a balloon when she found it was missing. I think that was a poor sort of a joke."

"Do you? Well, believe me, it was a joke of large dimensions. My wife flopped around that station at a great rate. She abused the station master. She said severe things to the policeman who was on duty there and she made the porters run themselves half to death looking for her suitcase. She was frantic."

"It was a low-down trick, if you ask me."

"I didn't ask you. I let her worry until about three minutes from train time, then I marched over to the telephone booth and reached in for her suitcase. It wasn't there! Then I searched the other booths. Then I went up in the air. Then I talked harshly in my turn to the station master, the policeman and the porters.

"When the train left I was perspiring freely, my necktie was under my ears, my wife was in tears, and I had written her a check for one hundred dollars with which to purchase wearing apparel to replace things that were in the suitcase."

"Well, what are you telling me all this for?"

"Because you got inquisitive and asked me."

"Oh, did I? I thought maybe you were looking for sympathy. All I can say is that you had it coming to you."

"That's right; I did."

"But what about that letter?"

"The letter is from my wife. It merely explains that she was watching me out of the corner of her eye while I made away with her suitcase."

"Then why——"

"Then she went to the women's parlor to powder her nose. What she really went for was to find a porter. She gave the porter a tip to sneak the suitcase out of the booth while she distracted my atention. She directed him to put it aboard her train without letting me know it."

"She's an actress, all right!"

"All women are actresses."

"Do you know what I think?"

"What with?"

"I say, do you know what I think?"

"I didn't know you had anything to think with."

"The dinner's on you!"

"Yes, my dinner is, but your dinner will be on you."

"What are you so peevish about? The suitcase isn't lost, is it?"

"No, the suitcase is all right!"

"Then what——"

"I'm just wondering if I'll get a rebate on that hundred."

* * *

Ineffective.

Sarcasm is frequently used successfully by women to rout men out of their seats in crowded cars, but the other day two women tried it with a different result, according to a New York correspondent of the Pittsburgh Dispatch. The women were dressed in that casual rainbow style meant to blind the eye and stun the perceptions. They rushed into the train at one of the uptown subway stations and grasped straps in front of two men who sat wedged closely together. One of the women looked squarely at the men.

"Oh, they can't be from New York, or they'd let ladies sit down," she said.

The men went on talking.

"Isn't it funny how many country people are coming here and bringing their poor manners with them?" the other asked in a loud voice.

The men continued talking.

"It's terrible that ladies have to ride with the cheap clerks," and the woman touched her rouged cheek with a heavyily perfumed handkerchief.

The train halted at a station. An old, poorly-dressed woman with a little girl by the hand entered the car. The men saw her simultaneously and both beckoned. They rose, aided her to be seated, and then one said to the other:

"You know I always give my seat in a subway train to a lady."

The two women beside them stared haughtily. The men smiled and moved to the platform.

* * *

Enough Said.

"Why do you consider women superior to men in intelligence?"

"A bald-headed man buys his restorer by the bottle, doesn't he?"

"Er—yes."

"Well, a woman doesn't waste time on a hair restorer; she buys hair."

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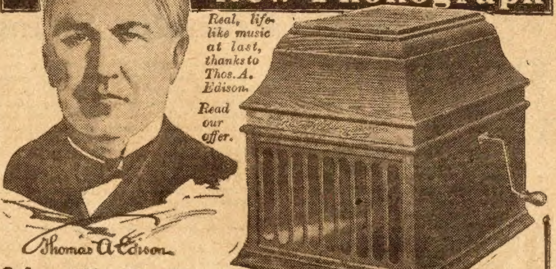
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Lone Scout Indian

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THIRD DEGREE BADGE (Silver)

In 91 Weeks 205,603 Boys have taken the following pledge as members of Lone Scouts of America:

"I pledge my allegiance to my flag and the nation for which it stands, with liberty and justice for all. I will 'Do a Useful Thing Each Day,' and be worthy of the name, Lone Scout."

The Lone Scouts of America was incorporated in Washington, District of Columbia, in 1915. At the first meeting of the incorporators, by-laws were adopted and W. D. Boyce was elected **Chief Totem.** The first Lone Scout took the pledge on October 25, 1915.

1 The Lone Scouts of America is for all wide-awake, ambitious boys everywhere. Any boy who can understand the pledge is eligible to membership. The pledge is so worded as to make the organization worldwide, including any boy living under some other flag than the United States flag. The Lone Scouts of America encourages patriotism, but is not a military organization in any sense.

2 The purpose of the Lone Scouts of America is to give the boys all the advantages of the Boy Scout movement (which was started in the United States by W. D. Boyce, Chief Totem of the Lone Scouts) while permitting them to operate alone if it is not convenient for them to belong to Tribes. Woodcraft and Scouting are only a part of the instructions. The Lone Scout motto is: **"Do a Useful Thing Each Day."** Every boy who lives up to this motto is going to be a successful man.

3 There are no membership dues or fees to pay; no expensive equipment for boys or their parents to buy. The Lone Scouts of America is not a money-making proposition. The organization is supported by the sale of its weekly magazine, "Lone Scout," in which instructions are given the Scouts. "Lone Scout" is sold by news agents for 3 cents a copy. Subscription rates, 25 cents four months, 75 cents a year.

4 As a member progresses in his Scout work he is awarded Degrees with appropriate Badges, and these Degrees make up Lodges. Badges of the first three Degrees (Tepee Lodge) are shown on the left. After the Tepee Lodge comes the Totem Pole Lodge. A member in this Lodge is entitled to put up a Lone Scout Totem Pole, upon which is placed a record of his Degrees.

5 In applying for membership, fill out the Application Blank given below, and send it with 2-cent stamp.

W. D. BOYCE, Chief Totem,
500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

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CHIEF TOTEM, 500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

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I am ready, with consent of my parents or guardian, to take the Lone Scout Pledge, which I have read. Herewith find 2 cents in stamps to pay for mailing Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts of America, First Degree Instructions and Tribe Booklet.

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A Small Thing

By Franklin Stringfellow

THE queerest feature about this life is the small happenings that frequently knock it out of kilter.

Danny Flynn is serving out a sentence imposed by an indignant State for train robbery. Now, that part of it doesn't bother Danny especially—that is to say, not overly much. He had always expected to get "his" some day, and had long ago made up his mind that when that day came, he would meet it like a man, and no kick coming. But what bothers him is how on earth they managed to lay the crime at his door, and so quickly? What had he overlooked? He doesn't know to this day.

Everything had worked out beautifully. Danny had figured it out beforehand on a sheet of paper. He had traveled over the ground by daylight. His every step had been written down and committed to memory. There was not a chance for failure. For once in his life Danny Flynn was going to play a sure thing.

On the evening in question, Danny, grip in hand and dressed immaculately, boarded the Pullman of the Limited. He looked the part of a prosperous traveling man, well satisfied with himself and life. He was jolly; he was a good mixer; he was a talker; his laugh could be heard the length of the car. In the three hours that Danny remained in the Pullman, he had made firm friends of all the children within reach, had scraped acquaintance with their parents, had been more than obliging to all about him. Never had they met a nicer young man. Even Sam, the dignified and ebony-hued porter, found himself unbending in the sunshine of Danny Flynn's geniality. Hadn't Danny given him a ten-dollar bill in exchange for a trifling service? He "shu-ah" had. Sam would never forget him.

At 9:30 that night Danny quitted the Pullman for the smoker. "Hey, Sam!" he shouted in that good-natured way of his. "Make up my berth, and make it up right. I'm going visiting." When halfway down the aisle, he halted and turned about, as tho just remembering something. "Hey, Sam! Bring me my bag, will you? There's something in it I can't do without." A suppressed snicker was heard throuout the car. A mental bet went around that the bag wasn't altogether filled with "dry goods." Sam grinned his broadest when he handed it to him.

It was good business, and Danny mentally patted himself on the back. His alibi had been perfected. Now, if only—with a shrug he dismissed the possibility of failure and passed on into the smoker. Dropping into a seat near the front door, he carelessly threw his bag into a corner, elevated his feet to the seat facing his, lit a cigar, pulled a newspaper from his pocket, and was soon deeply immersed in its contents.

Mile after mile the Limited tore on thru the darkness, and still Danny read his newspaper with apparently no concern as to his surroundings. It was only when the train slowed down preparatory to stopping at Bismark, where it was scheduled to take on water, that he seemed to take note of his whereabouts.

Then he pulled out his watch and consulted it. It was five minutes past ten. Dropping the newspaper, he secured his satchel and casually made his way to the forward platform. A sharp glance back assured him that his action had passed quite unnoticed. Not a single soul in that smoke-filled car had evinced enough interest even to look up when he closed the door. For which Danny was duly grateful.

Thankfully he made his way to the lower step, and a moment later, when the train had come to a halt, sprang lightly to the ground, choosing the side opposite from the insignificant depot.

It was a dark October night; dark but clear. After stumbling blindly along for several rods, Danny found that the stars gave forth sufficient light for his purpose. Cautiously he made his way to where a string of box cars loomed up out of the night. Reaching these he breathed somewhat more freely. Over on the platform there was plenty of life; mingled with the banging of trunks came a confused babel of talk and laughter, but here all was quiet. With the exception of himself, there was no one about.

Once more had Danny cause to be grateful. Skulking along in the deep shadows, he moved swiftly but silently to a point directly opposite the open door of the mail car. Here he came to a halt.

Crouching there in the darkness he proceeded to empty the traveling bag of its contents—one loaded revolver of large caliber, a suit of dilapidated overalls—pants and jumper, a frowzy old felt hat, and a large red handkerchief of the bandanna variety. With these articles and a few handfuls of grimy switchyard dust, he next proceeded, in a simple but very effective manner, to disguise himself.

This finished, he picked up his bag, hesitated briefly to make sure he had forgotten nothing, then stealthily wormed his way closer to the mail car. Just far enough away so that the lights from the train would not shine upon him, he halted.

"It's your next move," he whispered, addressing his thoughts to the panting engine.

* * * * * * *

When the Limited pulled out of Bismark that night, the six clerks composing Uncle Sam's mail force were so busily engaged in wrestling sacks—pulling them away from the door and dragging them into their proper places—that they failed to see a slight form, which, with the agility of a cat, had hurled itself thru the open door behind them. A moment later they were electrified by hearing a loud, coarse voice bawl out:

"Drop them sacks and stick up your hands before I shoot!"

In blank astonishment, which robbed them of whatever chance of resistance they might have had, they wheeled about to face an exceedingly large and shiny revolver in the hands of a rough, determined-looking, and very dirty-faced little man, wearing an old slouch hat, and dressed in a suit of grimy overalls.

"Stick 'em up now! Hurry! Way up!" As the clerks hesitated in confusion, the stranger repeated his order viciously. His words rang out above the din of the onrushing train clearly as the reports of a gasoline engine.

This time they obeyed with alacrity. Twelve hands simultaneously reached heavenward, and their captor saw fit to bestow a little praise.

"Good!" he shouted banteringly. "You boys are all heroes. You saved your own lives." But this burst of levity was entirely lost on the prisoners. They were too anxiously keeping their arms extended to pay much attention to anything else.

"Now, boys, range yourselves up against that letter case," came the next order. "Careful—be careful now—get a hustle, you big stiff! Kick that chair outa the way!" As they gingerly changed positions in obedience to his wishes, he kept up a string of shouted threats and commands that would have done credit to a bucko mate of one of the old-time sailing vessels.

"Careful there! Careful, I say." He bellowed out at them as tho they were a drove of hogs on the way to market. "Don't lower your arms, any of you." Punctuating his orders with a perfectly marvelous display in the handling of his weapon, and without once losing control of the situation, he finally had his captives lined up against the case.

All six now stood in a row along one side of the car, their arms stretched upward to the utmost limit, facing their captor, whose wicked little eyes seemed eagerly searching a pretext to pull the trigger.

For a moment the little man regarded his captives with a satisfied grin. Then he proceeded to "throw the scare" into them.

"Men," he began in gruff, biting tones, at the same time manipulating his revolver with such skill that it seemed to each and every one of the prisoners to be trained directly toward himself. "You guys are just waiting a chance to jump on me. Now ain't that so?" An uneasy movement in the ranks attested the correctness of his surmise. "I thought so," he grunted, and then continued. "Well, it's no use. I'll tell you why."

The robber paused to let his assertion sink in. "I'll tell you why it's no use," he resumed impressively. "The whole train is now in possession of our gang, and if I don't go thru this car, there's others that will. See?"

By their look of startled astonishment the victims readily disclosed that they not only "saw," but saw clearly. The little man kept on: "There are ten of us. One of them is running the train at this moment."

Considering that the train was making fully fifty miles an hour, and gathering speed at every turn of the wheels, it is hardly surprising that a shiver of apprehension went thru the prisoners.

"The rest of the bunch is scattered thru the train, taking up a collection for the benefit of the habitually tired," he further informed the quaking clerks.

"Now, you boys," he resumed sternly, "if you are good, and behave yourselves, and don't try any shenanigan business on me, you'll not be harmed at all. But," he waved the gun menacingly, "if you don't do exactly as I say, I'll shoot you, shoot you down like dogs, shoot you, and kick your miserable bodies off the car!" he finished with fiendish malevolence. "Get that?"

The unhappy victims, who by this time were experiencing great difficulty in keeping their aching arms extended, nodded their heads.

Running his practiced glance over the line of captives, much as a trader sizes up a bunch of horses, the little man apparently decided that he had them under pretty fair control.

Which was the truth. The mere thought of a supposedly wild and reckless outlaw being in command of that flying engine had caused fear—deadly fear—to congeal the blood in their veins, and they were on the verge of a collapse. There wasn't a speck of fight left in the whole bunch. The little man was now ready for the next move on the program.

"Turn around and face the wall," he commanded sharply.

As one man they obeyed him.

"Now all you guys, except the little dried-up runt on the end there, move back a couple of steps. There! That'll do. Lay down on your stomachs—flat!"

Again they obeyed without question, glad of the opportunity to rest their tired arms.

The clerks, with the exception of one man—the hold-up had purposely picked upon the weakest member of the sextette to remain standing—now lay stretched on the floor, their arms extended before them. Danny allowed the flicker of a smile to pass over his face. Evidently things were going as desired.

"Now, Shorty," he barked energetically to the unmuscular one, "you get a ball of stout string—stout, mind you—and we'll truss up these here chickens."

The little clerk tremblingly obeyed. In a short time he had bound the hands and feet of his unresisting companions securely enough to satisfy even the watchful robber, who hung over and bossed his every move, threatened to kill him instantly in case any of them managed to wiggle loose.

That job finished, he in turn bound the little clerk. The entire mail force was helpless. The outlaw was in undisputed possession of the car.

Wiping the beads of perspiration off his grimy brow with an equally grimy hand, the little man permitted a great sigh of relief to escape him. He took one more careful look at the prostrate forms, then turned his attention to the mail sacks.

With the eye of a connoisseur, intent on only securing the best, he ignored the regular letter pouches completely, and confined his attention strictly to those containing registered matter.

All of these he deftly unlocked—the key, attached to a chain, was hanging out of a drawer—and dumped upon the floor. There were a great many of them, and when he had finished, their contents made a huge pile; much more than he could possibly carry away with safety.

As he gazed on the stack of precious parcels before him, Danny sighed regretfully. Most of them would have to be left behind. He hated the idea, but well he knew that many a man had been caught by making a hog of himself. So, being a good workman, he did the next best thing.

Once more he went to work, this time sorting out only those packages he was certain contained money. Some of it was in gold coin, and some in silver, but by far the most was in the shape of bank notes, many fat bundles of which fell into his eager hands.

The robber worked swiftly; his nimble fingers seemed fairly to fly over the packages. Notwithstanding the fact that he had several times to cease work and threaten the prisoners, he finished his task in a remarkably short time. But still, time was flying. On consulting his watch, he found that just twenty-five minutes remained before they reached the next station. He would have to hurry.

Lightly he stepped to the other side of the car and recovered his traveling bag, which had preceded him aboard by about two seconds. He opened it and drew forth a collar, tie, a pair of cuffs, a small hand-mirror, a comb, and a whisk broom, all of which he would need presently. He laid them carefully on a chair.

Then, gathering together the rich packages, he packed them carefully in the bag. There were many, and he experienced some trouble in getting them all stored away, but finally accomplished it. With that, his work was completed. All that remained was the quick getaway and a happy ending.

Again the little man consulted his watch. Barely sixteen minutes remained to him, time enough, but none to waste. Thoughtfully he gazed at his prisoners. It was high time for him to cast aside his disguise and resume his ordinary trim appearance. The welfare of his future plans depended largely upon his keeping this transformation a secret. It was highly important that none of the clerks should catch even so much as a glimpse of him during the remainder of his stay in the car.

The outlaw didn't exactly see—yes, he did. Quickly he jumped to his feet and solved the problem by draping empty mail sacks over their heads and shoulders. "First time I see those sacks move," he remarked grimly, "I'm going to shoot, and shoot to kill." Then he got busy and cleaned himself up.

In one corner of the car stood a washstand, fitted up with the usual wavy looking-glass, a bar of soap, and a towel. When he had rapidly divested himself of his overalls and jumper and flung them out of the door, Danny made free use of all these. The soil was removed from his hands and face. Then he carefully combed his hair, polished off his shoes with the towel, and threw it on the floor. When he had given his clothes a thoro brushing, he began to breathe easier.

Hastily he put on his collar, tie, and cuffs, and began to prepare for leaving. The bandanna handkerchief was folded into a neat square and placed in the satchel. He brushed off the old felt hat, and was about to pack that away, also; then he changed his mind. Some one might see him outside and wonder what he was doing, running around bareheaded in the middle of the night. And he didn't want any one to wonder. Tho his efforts to twist it into a more becoming shape were vain, he decided it would be better to wear it. Half a hat was better than none at all.

Time was becoming precious. In three minutes he would have to leave the car, in six he would be safe and beyond all suspicion, or—— Mere thought of the alternative made him nervous. With slightly trembling fingers, he hastened to finish his toilet.

And none too soon, either. A prolonged toot from the engine, together with slackening of the speed, warned

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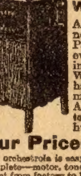

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him that the time for departure was close at hand.

He snatched up the hand-glass and took a final minute survey of himself. He seized the comb and gave his hair a few parting touches, then crowded his toilet articles into the already filled bag, closed and locked it. After he had put on his coat, pulled down his vest, and fumbled for a moment with his tie, the little man was his old immaculate self again.

Seated in a chair by the mail-car door, he calmly awaited the moment for leaving. No, not calmly, exactly, for it was plain that he was worrying. Now that the excitement was over, and his object accomplished, he was suffering a reaction. Supposing this, and supposing that. A hundred possibilities had swarmed to his mind. Just as he was on the point of putting his skilfully conceived plan of escape into execution, it seemed very likely to fail.

But possibility or not, it was now too late to back out. With difficulty the little man aroused himself. Time was fleeting. They were passing thru the outskirts of the city. There—the lights of the station had burst into view. With a final sharp survey of his prisoners to make sure that they were still securely bound, he warned them that their slightest movement meant instant death.

Then, after pocketing his revolver, and picking up the now really precious traveling bag, he made his noiseless way to the door and slipped off into the stygian darkness of a back street two blocks from the depot.

* * * * * * *

The train was slowing down; a hundred feet further and it would come to a stop before the station. Sam, the veteran porter, stool in hand, was opening wide the vestibule doors, preparatory to making himself useful, when out of the chair car came a man who paused on the platform beside him.

"Sam," he said, with a forced smile and scarcely subdued evidence of excitement, "Sam, have you made up my berth yet?"

Sam recognized the friendly passenger at a glance. Memory of that ten-buck tip was still with him. "Yessah," he answered with a good-natured grin, "Ah done made it up jus' like you tol' me, sah."

Danny passed on into the Pullman, a song of joy in his heart. He had planned his work and had followed that plan to a successful culmination. A task well performed is a joy in itself. No thought of the evil to come bothered him. Why should it? He crawled into bed, and grinned slightly at the pandemonium that had broken out somewhere forward.

Fifteen minutes later the police gently pushed aside the curtains of Berth Number Ten, and found their quarry asleep with the incriminating bag hugged tightly to his bosom.

And now for the little thing that caused the wreck of Danny's well-laid plans. A little piece of court plaster not over a quarter of an inch square.

Danny had scratched his finger slightly, earlier in the evening, while opening the coach window for the maiden lady that sat across the aisle from him, the porter had affixed the plaster to the bleeding cut, thereby earning his ten, and then, just at the wrong time, the plaster came off, a little blood oozed out, became smeared around the finger—not much, but enough to attract the notice of the little clerk who had helped Danny truss up the others. It was the first thing he mentioned after his bonds had been cut.

Mentioned! Yelled, rather. "His middle finger was all bloody!" he kept shouting over and over again, as he danced about the platform in vast excitement. Which would have amounted to nothing had not Sam, the porter, been in the crowd. But he was, and after he had heard the statement several times, with the added information that the robber was "a slim little cuss with a valise that looked all shiny and new," Sam began to do some tall thinking. More than that, he mentioned his suspicions to one of the policemen, who, thinking there might be something in it, led the way quietly to Danny's berth.

And Danny, in his first waking moment, said things that made the suspicion a certainty.

⁂

FORTUNES OF FRITZ.

"I'd like to give you that dog," proceeded the man in the doorway. "I'd like for you to have it. He's a nice pup and I'm grateful for what you——"

"Oh, all right," said Bammett, absentmindedly, frowning at the paper before him. Already he had forgotten his charity client and was vaguely annoyed at his chatter.

"I'll take him to your house," added the man. Then he vanished.

That was why Bammett, when he opened his front door that night, had the surprise of seeing Fritz. It always was a surprise to see Fritz, because most of him was where one didn't expect it. Reliable persons assured Bammett later that Fritz was a dachshund of good breeding, but Bammett always shook his head. He said Fritz was nothing more or less than a ball of string unwound and stretched out and that, for his part, he should think Fritz would establish telegraph stations on his head and tail in order to keep track of himself during his tortuous progress.

The annoying part of it was that every foot of Fritz's length was brimming over with affection, and if there is anything more annoying than being compelled, in spite of yourself, to love something you have made up your mind to dislike it has yet to be discovered.

With Fritz coiled up comfortably in his lap that evening Bammett had a sudden chill. He remembered that Mrs. Bammett disliked dogs vigorously. In fact, that was why they had never owned one heretofore. Bammett felt that he should have to pay dearly when his wife returned for the fit of abstraction that was responsible for his acquiring Fritz. And he was not disappointed.

Mrs. Bammett shrieked when she arrived from the train that week and was greeted by Fritz's head and shoulders and beaming eyes. The rest of him trailed off into the butler's pantry and was invisible.

"Where did that awful thing come from?" she demanded. "Henry Bammett, why on earth did you go and get a dog the minute my back was turned, when you know how I hate the creatures? And he's so much dog!" she wailed indignantly.

"I couldn't help it," said Bammett, after the manner of men. "He was thrust upon me!"

"There was plenty of time to run before all of him got there!" Mrs. Bammett insisted. "No human being could help seeing his approach hours before his total arrival! You've got to get rid of him!"

"Whom can I give him to?" asked Bammett.

"Go away!" cried Mrs. Bammett to Fritz.

Bammett, gazing at Fritz, brown, beaming and wagging, felt a new protecting affection stir within him. Surreptitiously he patted the sleek head. "I'll dispose of him, somehow," he promised.

"Aren't you going to do anything about this dreadful dog?" Mrs. Bammett asked a week later.

"I thought you were beginning to like him," said Bammett. "You feed him!"

"I can't let a living thing starve to death right before my eyes!" she asserted, frigidly. "I suppose I would feed a convict, if he was helpless on my hands!"

"You might find somebody who would take him," she insisted the next night. Fritz had come contentedly and lain down across her feet. She frowned as she looked at him.

"You might push him away, you know," suggested her husband.

"I wouldn't hurt a helpless creature no matter how I hated it!" Mrs. Bammett told him, virtuously.

Bammett came home early one night and found Fritz in Mrs. Bammett's lap. She had the grace to blush.

"He just got up here," she explained, rapidly. "I was putting him down, when I stopped to notice how silky his hair is. If you cared anything for me you would have done something about him before this!"

Bammett rose to the occasion. "Your troubles are over," he told her. "The janitor of our building has promised that he'll take Fritz as a favor, tho he doesn't care about dogs."

He paused. Mrs. Bammett, her arms about Fritz, whose tongue was hanging out from his sudden choking surge into her embrace, was glaring at her husband. "Henry Bammett!" she cried. "Give this poor, helpless puppy to a horrid old janitor who'll make him live in a coal cellar? Not if I know it. The idea! I don't believe you care anything about this dog at all. I shall keep Fritz myself if nobody else on earth cares enough about him to——"

"Fritz, old boy," interrupted Bammett, "you win!"

⁂

His Cheap Trip.

"Drat the man who's always figuring out how to do things with a minimum expediture of cash," muttered Arbuthnot at he ordered a shave, a haircut, a massage, a seafoam and a shine. "Cheap stuff is all right, but not when you're traveling. I came down here by boat because a friend of mine told me that it was much cheaper to come by water than by rail. He said it took a little longer, but I wouldn't need to eat any dinner on the boat and I would be here some time the next morning, and I would save a lot by not paying railroad fare.

"I followed his advice and embarked at about 6 in the evening. When the steward came along I said that I wouldn't be down to dinner, as I wasn't hungry. It was true. I wasn't—not then. But after about an hour the cook began to throw out insinuations. Those savory insinuations became more and more inviting until I moved to the other end of the deck to get the fresh air.

"But the fresh air stimulated my appetite most astonishingly, and the first thing I knew I was drifting back to the insinuations again. I was the first one down in the dining-room for dinner.

"I said to myself that it was a good thing to eat a big, hearty meal just before retiring, for then I would not need any breakfast the next morning. I would just lie in bed until after the breakfast hour.

"But as luck would have it my stateroom was just off the dining-room! They began rattling dishes at 7 o'clock in the morning. The aroma of coffee began to float around on the breeze. A fellow came and sat down to eat just outside my stateroom door. I heard him making music with his dishes and I had to hang to the sides of the bed in order to remain quiet.

"'Is your bacon crisp enough?' said the steward to the man. 'Are those rolls hot enough?'

"Ye gods! Coffee, crisp bacon and hot rolls! I stood it as long as I could and then looked at my watch. There would yet be five minutes before the dining-room would close! That was the hastiest toilet I ever made. I caught the last waiter by the coat tail just as he was leaving the dining-room. 'Two minutes yet before closing time!' I said, 'I want hot rolls, crisp bacon and coffee!'

"I did not miss a meal on that boat, nor a chance to eat anything that offered. Economy! It was one of the most expensive trips I ever made!"

⁂

His Choice.

Lotteries appeal to him. Day or night, rain or shine, he is ready to take a chance on anything from a game rooster to a ten-story building. Results are invariably unfavorable, but his optimism continues.

Recently his friend Jones, likewise a traveling man, met him in a dairy lunch.

"Well, Bob, how's business?" Jones asked.

"Pretty fair, Jones," Bob replied, "but nothing to what it will be when I get my car. I figure I can cover twice the territory and in less time."

"Well, we all fall for the car stuff," Bob exclaimed. "What make will you buy?"

"Either an M— or an I—," his friend answered; "I have a chance on both."

⁂

He Won.

An Englishman, Irishman and Scotchman once went into a tower to decide who could see the farthest thru a telescope.

The Englishman, who looked first, declared he could see the minute hand on the clock four or five miles away.

"I can see the minute hand of the same clock moving," said the Scotchman.

Pat stood in amazement listening to his comrades. When he looked thru the telescope he was seen to smile.

"Faith," he said, "if I don't see the same clock striking, sure I do."

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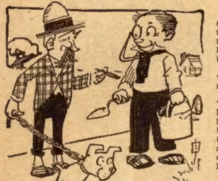


Jones—"Going to raise your own vegetables again this year?"

Litterateur—"Yes; I made it pay last year. I got a fat check from a magazine for an article on the bugs and worms that destroyed my entire crop."

Get Careless.

"A man who never made a mistake never made anything," said the Wise One.

"Yes," agreed the Boob. "But a lot of chaps who believe in that get careless and never make anything but mistakes."

An Involved Statement.

"The average individual," said a Secret Service official, "can't give a detective simple, plain, straightforward information. Questioned by a detective, he becomes as involved and difficult as the office boy.

"A detective asked an office boy if it was Mr. Jones or his partner who reached the office first as a rule.

"'Well,' said the boy, turning very red, 'Mr. Jones at first was always last, but later he began to get earlier, till at last he was first, tho before he had always been behind. He soon got later again, tho of late he has been sooner, and at last he got behind as before. But I expect he'll be getting earlier sooner or later.'"

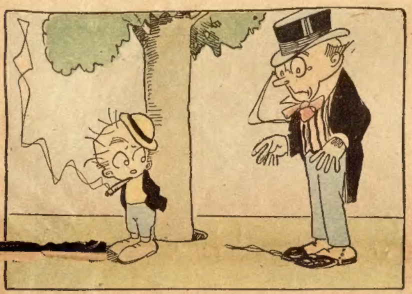
Proved Unnecessary.

"This seems to be a very dangerous precipice," remarked the tourist. "I wonder that they have not put up a warning-board!"

"Yes," answered the guide, "it is dangerous. They kept a warning-board up for two years, but no one fell over, so it was taken down."

GARDEN STUFF.

Tho I am too old for war
There is something I'm good for,
I can raise some garden truck,
And the cost of living buck.
I can raise truck with a will,
And the devil with K. Bill!



"Don't you know that smoking will shorten your life, my boy?"
"Aw, I don't care. I've seen everything dere is."

Putting a Foot in It.

Nijinsky, the famous Russian dancer, is, of course, a good musician.

At a reception the other day M. Nijinsky listened without wincing to a pianoforte performance, more vigorous than skilful, on the part of the daughter of the house.

"M. Nijinsky, how do you like my little girl's playing?" the hostess asked her guest of honor.

"Ah, madam," M. Nijinsky replied in his quaint English, "I think your daughter haff a vairy firm tread."

Properly Classified.

Visitor—"So I belong to the animal kingdom, do I? That's right, my little dear. I see you know your lessons. Now, tell me what kind of an animal I am?"

Candid Child—"Ma knows, and she says you're a cat."

Living Up to His Name.

When the train stopped at an inland Virginia station the Northern tourist sauntered out on the platform. Beneath a tall pine stood a lean animal with scraggy bristles. The tourist was interested.

"What do you call that?" he queried of a lanky "cracker."

"Razorback hawg."

"Well, what is he doing rubbing against that tree?"

"He's stropping himself, mister; jest stropping himself."

Will Keep Job, Too.

"My wife tells me that at the Woman's Club the other afternoon your wife displayed a marvelous knowledge of parliamentary law."

"Well, great Scot! Why shouldn't she? She's been speaker of our house for fifteen years."

The Nearest.

With a view to propitiating his captors, an obese prisoner handed over his watch and a mouth organ to four men of the Bleakshire regiment. Difficulties arose when it came to dividing the spoil, but an inspiration helped them out.

"Look 'ere," said one of the lucky men, "let me 'ave the mouth organ, and I'll give up all claim to a share in the ticker. Then, 'ow would it be if I played you something, and the one as guesses wot tune it is takes the watch?"

This was agreed to and the musician did play something and he played that something pretty badly. Then came the guessing.

"None of you is right," declared the instrumentalist. "Is it to be the nearest, or shall I play something else?"

"Nearest!" came in chorus.

"Tobbins takes it, then," was the verdict. "He was a long way the nighest. 'Beer, beer, glorious beer,' wasn't arf a bad guess; I was playin' 'As pants the 'art for coolin' streams.'"

Too Thin.

Mildred had just had her first dip in the ocean.

"How did you like it, dear?" asked her mother as she fastened up the little 6-year-old's frock.

Mildred stared angrily at the sparkling sea.

"I didn't like it at all, mother," she replied, coldly. "I sat on a wave and I went thru."

Not Depraved.

Miranda Miller took the seat in a street car which 'Rastus Robbins had offered her with a great flourish.

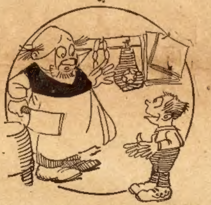
"Thank you evah so much, Mistah Robbins," she said; "but Ah don't like to deprive you of youah seat."

"Oh," said 'Rastus with a greater flourish, "no depravity at all, Miss Millah, none at all."

The Simple Truth.

Mabel—"I'm going to get married next month, Lizzie, if Jim can get a week off from his job. I think he'll be able to; yer see, it isn't as if 'e was asking for a vacation to have a good time."

* * *



Boy—"Give me a pound of steak and I want it tough."

Butcher—"Tough? Why?"

Boy—"'Cause if it's tender me father'll eat it all an' I'll get none."

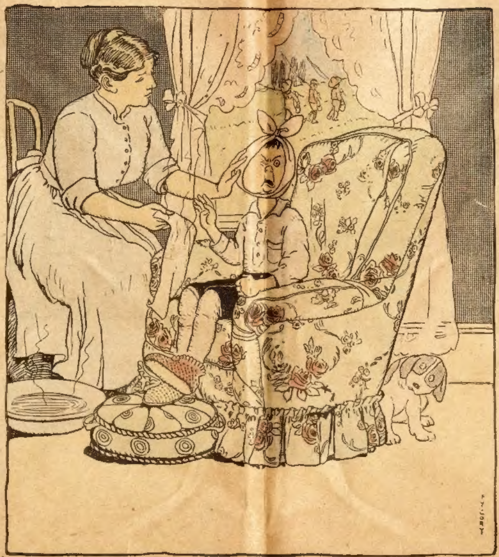
In No Position to Judge.

Head of Firm—"How long do you want to be away on your honeymoon?"

Hawkins (timidly)—"Well, sir—er—what would you say?"

Head of Firm—"How do I know? I haven't seen the bride!"

"BEN BOLT"---The Kid That You Were Yourself.



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Don't you remember that toothache, Ben Bolt,
That toothache that closed your right eye?
It was worse than the mumps, with its twitches and jumps,
But no one but ma saw you cry.

PATRIOTISM.

The other night
I went to the theater
With a lowbrow friend.
And the orchestra played
'Little Brown Jug,"
And he thought
It was the national anthem
And he stood up.
And I did, too,
Darn him.

She Was All Right.

There lives in Providence a very matter-of-fact man whose wife is, and always has been, a bit sentimental and fond of trying to draw from husband those little endearments he has ever failed to furnish.

"I suppose," said she, on one occasion, "if you should meet some pretty girl you would cease to care for me."

"What nonsense you talk!" said husband. "What do I care for youth or beauty? You suit me all right."

Revised.

"Did he tell you all the bright things his youngsters have been saying?"

"Yes."

"What did you say?"

"I told him children should be seen and not heard from."

His Chance.

Burrows — "It is always the unexpected that happens, you know."

Bangs — "Ah, then possibly you are going to pay me that $10 you owe me."

IMAGISTE LOVE LINES.

I love my lady with a deep purple love;
She fascinates me like a fly
Struggling in a pot of glue.
Her eyes are gray, like twin ash-cans,
Just emptied, about which still hovers
A dusty mist.
Her disposition is as bright as a ten-cent shine,
Yet her kisses are tender and goulashy.
I love my lady with a deep purple love.

A Promising Recruit.

The officer of the day, during his tour of duty, paused to question a sentry who was a new recruit.

"If you should see an armed party approaching, what would you do?" asked the officer.

"Turn out the guard, sir."

"Very well. Suppose you saw a battleship coming across the parade-ground, what would you do?"

"Report to the hospital for examination, sir," was the prompt reply.

Slightly Mixed.

Poor old Jones had just died and his office colleagues attended the ceremony. It had been an impressive occasion, and Mrs. Jones had done all she could to relieve the gloom of the occasion when the mourners returned.

As Smith and Brown departed to their respective homes they exchanged impressions.

"Bu'ful ceremony," said Smith. "Mosh impressive."

"Yes," said Brown. "Everything went off quite nicely."

"Yesh, ve' nish. We 'ad a real good time. And the bride looked perf'ly lovely."

"Eh!"

"I shay bride looked perf'ly lovely."

"Smith," said Brown, "it was a funeral we went to today—not a wedding."

"Funeral? Tha' sho? Well, whatever 'twas, 'twas a great shuccesh—great shuccesh."

The Cat That Went Back.

Mr. Penn—"They say the streets in Boston are frightfully crooked."

Mr. Hubb—"They are. Why, do you know, when I first went there I could hardly find my way around."

"That must be embarrassing."

"It is. The first week I was there I wanted to get rid of an old cat we had, and my wife got me to take it to the river a mile away."

"And you lost the cat all right?"

"Lost nothing! I never would have found my way home if I hadn't followed the cat!"

"Grovel" Was Right.

"I grovel here before you in the dust!" observed the impassioned youth, as he sank onto the drawing-room floor.

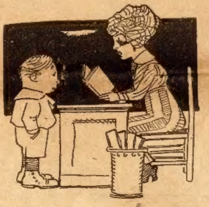
"I don't know what you mean by dust," replied she coldly. "I look after this room most carefully myself every morning."

A Definition.

"Father, what do they mean by gentlemen farmers?"

"Gentlemen farmers, my son, are farmers who seldom raise anything except their hats."

* * *



Teacher—"If a motorist averages $10 a day for gasoline, $8 for repairs and $6 for fines, what is the car costing him monthly?"

Boy—"Nothing, ma'am; he's got a rich father."

Could Have Both.

Edith—"I think Jack is horrid. I asked him if he had to choose between me and a million dollars which he would take, and he said the million."

Harry—"That's all right! He knew if he had the million you'd be easy."

A Severe Critic.

Annie, a Slav washerwoman, who works one day a week in a certain south side home, seems to have an ear for music, even if she does possess no technical knowledge on the subject.

In the home, a few days since, a piano tuner spent about six hours trying to put the instrument into condition again.

The laundry of the home is directly under the living-room in which the tuner was performing his monotonous task.

When Annie came up after her day's work was done she said to her employer:

"You know man in parlor?"

"Yes, Annie."

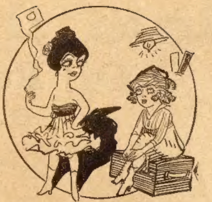
"Well, I want to tell you one thing. I no like to hear him. He rotten piano player."

A Dead Shot.

The valor and candid simplicity of our Indian Babu are proverbial. A story goes of one, anent the German East campaign, who was about the most laconic, competent, deadly earnest stationmaster and marksman combined that ever lived. A regiment of men like him would end the war, for this is the wire he sent: "One hundred Germans attacking station. Send immediately one rifle and one hundred rounds ammunition."

HAPPY MR. BROWN.

"Mr. Brown's in good spirits," they said, and we knew
There was cause for his not feeling down;
'Twould have been rather queer if he hadn't felt glad
When the best of good spirits were in Mr. Brown.



The Ingenue—"Did you see the review of this show in the Morning Blatt? It said I was rarely beautiful."

The Soubrette—"So rarely they might as well say never."

How the Disaster Occurred.

A gentleman in Cincinnati employs two negroes to work on his rather extensive gardens, which he personally oversees. One morning Sam did not appear.

"Where is Sam, George?" he asked.

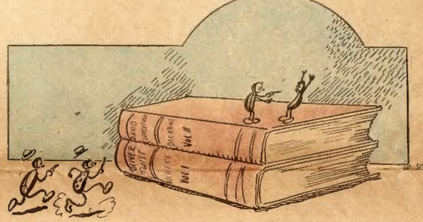
"In de hospital, sah."

"In the hospital? Why, how in the world did that happen?"

"Well, Sam he been a-tellin' me ev'y mo'nin' foh ten yeahs, he gwine to lick his wife 'cause o' her naggin'."

"Well?"

"Well, yestiddy, she done ovahheah him. Da's all."



Bugville Detective—"Hurry, Joe; there's a second story man!"

Another Viewpoint.

Mrs. Peasley's young hopeful had carried off the primary prize, and the other mothers were crowding around to congratulate her with the best grace they could summon.

"But don't let it make him conceited, dear," admonished one experienced parent.

"Oh, no, indeed," fluttered Mrs. Peaseley. "I always tell him it's not because he's so bright that he wins, but because the other children are so dull."

Honesty or Pride?

"What's the matter, little girl?"

"Two boys were fightin', and I got struck with a stone."

"That's it; the innocent bystander always gets hurt."

"But I don't know as I was an innocent bystander. I was what they was fightin' about."

A Flattering Explanation.

A sturdy Scot, 6 feet 5 inches in height, is a gamekeeper near Strafford. One hot day last summer he was accompanying a bumptious sportsman, of very small stature, when he was greatly troubled by gnats. The other said to him:

"My good man, why is it that the gnats do not trouble me?"

"I daursay," replied the gamekeeper, with a comprehensive glance at the other's small proportions, "it will be because they havna' seen ye yet!"

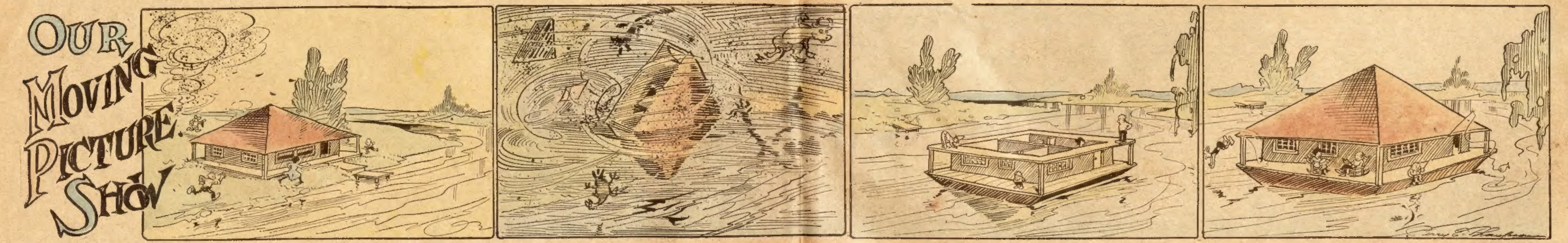
The Point of View.

The kind-hearted woman stopped to reprove the youngster who had chased a cat up a tree.

"You bad boy, suppose you were a cat, would you like to have any one chase you in that fashion?"

"Gee! wouldn't I tho, if I could climb like that!" said the youngster, grinning.

LIFE IN THE WINDY WEST



Everybody get inside quick!
Cyclone coming! Hump yourselves for safety!

Wow! Zowie! Bing, bang, bung, kerslam! We're going right over into the river!

Well, don't it beat all!
We are still here and she floats! Now to put a new roof on her——

And spend the rest of the summer in a beautiful house-boat, floating around and enjoying ourselves!

Into the Unknown

Or, Rajah and Ruby

By Will Gage Carey

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Begun in No. 28, July 14. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER X.

THE TRIP TO THE PALACE.

WHAT could it all mean! Rodney Bond was equally as much at loss to understand the capture of the Princess as was I myself. So much trouble and misfortune, of late, being directly connected with the Rajah Mazajinfizzi and his fake valet, my first thoughts now were of them. Had they in some manner been saved from the wreck of the Maid of Normandy (if such were the unhappy fate of that little ship), and arriving safely upon Mandalore already started something? It sort of looked that way; but further arguing the matter convinced both Bond and myself that the act was of King Bolero's own instigation.

Rodney Bond was for starting at once for the palace, but I dissuaded him, and suggested that a better course would be for him to tell me a little something more of the island, and how we stood; after which we would go together to the aid of the Princess.

"You're right," he agreed. "I think they're gettin' somewhat suspicious of me already, seein' me havin' so many quiet talks with Lucia Coiffi. We must do nothin' to put them wise to our plans, or they'll set a guard along the coast which will put a crimp in our idea of gettin' away in the launch; an' regardin' Mandalore in general, here's about what we're up against: The natives are neither friendly nor unfriendly, neither savages nor civilized; they speak a language of their own, but most of 'em understand a little English. Ol' King Bolero speaks it as well as you or I—learned it from passin' traders, or perhaps the French governess, I take it, he got hold of somehow to bring up Lucia properly as becomes a Princess of the royal court——"

"And he's fond of Lucia?"

"Say, he worships her. So do his subjects—most of 'em! If they get wise to us tryin' to take her away from Mandalore they'd shoot so many poisoned arrows into us we'd look like a couple of porcupines!"

"Pleasant thought."

"An' like as not to happen 'fore we're thru with it."

"We'll take the chance. Now, a little more about these big walloper natives: Are they superstitious?"

"'Superstitious!' Well, rather; the witch-doctors have got 'em goin' proper. They have their sacred rites, an' believe in heathen gods an' idols, an' all that bunk."

"Good!"

"What do you mean—good?"

"Well, we'll use all that in our plan to escape. That'll work against them, their being superstitious; it'll help us to get by."

"I get you."

"Now, one more question: Has little Lucia Coiffi any enemy you know of on Mandalore?"

Rodney Bond was silent for a moment, then replied after due reflection: "Yes, one."

"Who?"

"Miabelle Nazaro."

"And she——"

"Lives in the palace, and is also quite a favorite of King Bolero."

"Why is she an enemy of little Lucia?"

"Jealousy."

"I thought likely."

"Yes; the King has one son—the young Prince Zahr. Now this ruler of Mandalore wants Zahr to marry Lucia—who, by the way, has about as much affection for him as a cobra——"

"And Prince Zahr?"

"Is daffy about Miabelle."

"Fine! Couldn't be better!" I exclaimed, seeing how all this could be put to our advantage.

"Yes; but so long as Lucia Coiffi remains upon Mandalore, Miabelle Nazaro has got about as much chance of annexin' Prince Zahr as you have of becomin' president of the Suffragette Union! But with Lucia well out of the runnin'—why, things would be fine an' dandy for Miabelle——"

"Then we'll do all we can to further the love affairs of Miabelle; I dare say, she'll gladly reciprocate in any way possible to help Lucia—leave!"

Rodney grinned.

"Some head—some head!" he remarked admiringly.

"Well, Rodney, I think myself I'm pretty good." Then, recalling immediately certain recent clashes with the Rajah Mazajinfizzi and his valiant valet, I made haste to add: "But I'm not the best there is yet, by quite a ways."

"Another thing," observed Bond. "I believe that Miabelle is at the bottom of this present trouble the little Princess is into."

"You do?"

"I'm sure of it; she's accused her of somethin'—an' gone to King Bolero with a lot of phony talk, an' he's fell for it. She must have played it up strong, or the King would never have sent his guard to take her away by force; mebbe she's been accused of treason——"

"Come on," I said, making ready to go, "we'll soon find out."

As we were leaving the cavern Rodney cautioned. "Remember, now, you've come to close the deal for the copra; an' here's another idea: You've come from a different part of the United States from me—an' you don't understand a word of English such as the King talks an' can savvy, see?"

"No; not clearly."

"Well, if you make out like you can't understand what the King says to you, it'll save answerin' a lot of questions which might otherwise get us tied up into a knot!"

"Not a bad idea."

"You do that, hear! Anything the King says to you, why, you just grin an' bow an' scrape, an' look mightily tickled, like you'd answer him if you could, but the stuff's off on account of different lingo. He's a wise ol' fox, is King Bolero, an' this'll save us a lot of bother."

"He'll not get next? He'll hear you talking to me——"

"If he does, it'll be in a language that neither he nor you nor me can understand. We'll be at the palace in fifteen minutes; don't forget your cue."

We passed from the rugged coast portion of the isle down into a verdant valley, with cocoanut groves and clusters of thatched huts scattered about here and there. The sun beamed down upon us, not too ardently; the perfume of wild flowers was in the air, and the songs of birds. A peaceful, pleasing scene and panorama. Would it become a setting for grim tragedy before long?

From time to time we passed groups of natives; they made no movement to molest us in any manner, but they glowered at us in a manner by no means to my liking. Some were hideously painted, and carried bows and grass quivers filled with exceedingly long and businesslike-looking arrows.

"They use poisoned arrow points," Rodney said, in a low aside to me, "an' their best marksmen split a small white shell at fifty yards."

"Let's hope they confine their attentions to small white shells," I answered fervidly, as we hastened on.

Now we could see the pinnacles of the palace, gleaming above a forest on ahead, and soon the building itself came to view. It was rather an imposing structure of gray limestone, and of a pretentious form of architecture such as one would scarcely expect to see upon a semi-civilized isle in the Southern sea. It was completely inclosed by a high, white wall, with wide gates on each side of the rectangle. There were armed guards at each gate. Rodney Bond, however, had been a frequent caller, and we had no difficulty in being admitted into the patio (or court garden) and then into the palace proper. An attendant ushered us from room to room, on our way to King Bolero's inner sanctum; and I was amazed at the sumptuous furnishings. Where had this ruler of Mandalore accumulated such an astonishing array. There was bric-a-brac of the mid-Victorian period, stores of really precious English silver and crystals, masterpieces of Sheraton and Chippendale furniture, luxurious tapestries, both French and Florentine; brocades, carvings and gildings; priceless ceramics, jades and bronzes from China and Japan, and incomparable carpets and rugs from Persia and India!

Reveling as I was in all this beauty and luxury, it was rather a sudden comedown for me when a great door at one side silently folded back, and we stood in a great, comparatively bare apartment, at the end of which was seated King Bolero upon a plain, high throne, surrounded by his courtiers and attendants.

Word of our coming had evidently gone on ahead; the King (clearly in a vile and violent humor) was awaiting the interview. We went directly up to him, bowed low and then stood there amidst silence and the curious scrutiny of court and King alike.

From a standpoint of physical pulchritude, King Bolero would never have taken any prizes. He was long, lanky, exceedingly thin—even cadaverous looking; moreover, in his present state of mind, his countenance bore an expression both of cunning and cruelty by no means reassuring.

"King Bolero," Rodney began, with an ease and confidence I was far from sharing, "this gent here is the one I told you would be coming along to close that copra deal."

The ruler of Mandalore made no sign that he heard, except that his little beady eyes narrowed to mere slits. Rodney resumed: "He is a good scout—you'll like him, King; but, unfortunately, he comes from the far southwest corner of the United States, an' don't savvy the lingo such as you and I now speak. I say, unfortunately; but what you want to say to him, just say thru me—an' we'll get along famously. How's every ol' thing, King?"

Instead of replying to this friendly, and you might almost say chummy, greeting, the King (ignoring Rodney's words) turned fiercely upon me with the exclamation: "Well—what you got to say for yourself!"

Evidently he had taken instant dislike to me; but I bowed low again, and came up grinning like a sick cat. Rodney poked me in the ribs. "Say somethin' to him, you big stiff!" he advised, sotto voce.

With that glum, glowering form above what could I say? I bowed low again, and straightened up with a smile of seraphic bliss and enjoyment spread over my face; it was not enough; again I felt Rodney's elbow in my ribs; it was up to me. Then, looking the ruler of Mandalore straight in the eyes, I observed in deep, sonorous tones: "Yaaka hula! Hickey dula!"

The King gave a sudden start; he turned to Rodney: "A young man of very bright intellect, evidently——"

"Oh, he is all of that, King!" Rodney broke in. "I may say he is one of the brightest men you ever met, King—after you get to know him!"

He bent over closer to me, an expression of sneering distrust upon his evil face. For a time he surveyed me in silence.

"I should say," he resumed at length, "that if your brains were silk there'd be just about enough to make pajamas for an Arizona centipede!"

I felt myself flush, despite my efforts to look pleased and tickled half to death at the King's attention; I heard a sort of muffled snicker from Rodney—which didn't help matters to any extent. Then that King started in, and he said more insulting things inside of five minutes than I've ever listened to before or since; and all the time I beamed upon him as tho I thought he was inviting me to share a cold bottle and a small bird with him! Rodney quit trying not to laugh; he grinned thru the whole tirade—I guess he couldn't help it; and there I stood, making goo-goos at a King of a cannibal isle who was calling me everything he could think of, and roasting me to a frazzle!

As a sort of grand finale he added: "Now, you poor half-baked stew-bum, you poor imbecile wop from the far southwest corner, tell me how you got here and what you came for!"

I could stand it no longer; his abuse was beyond human endurance; I took a step closer to him, and as he drew back I shouted out hoarsely: "You big, long-legged son-of-a-Mongolian-river-pirate I came here to give you the beating of your life! Hop down off that soapbox and take your medicine!"

I heard Rodney gasp; he had turned deadly white. The King leaned back on the throne and whirled his thumbs complacently before him.

"Can't talk, hey!" he hissed down. "Can't understand a word! I thought not!"

I was mad thru and thru—crazy mad and irresponsible

"Well, you big four-flusher," I called up to him, "are you coming down or will I have to come and get you?"

Strange as it may seem, his court and attendants made no effort to interfere in any manner; I don't know how much of what was spoken they understood; but there was no mistaking the gestures; they were enjoying the situation to the limit—so far—and they took no pains to conceal the fact.

"Am I coming?" repeated King Bolero. "Coming right now!" And down he jumped. At that instant four big savages grabbed me and pinioned my arms behind my back, and a like number seized upon Rodney Bond. The King was now like a madman; the light of murder flashed in his eyes. "I'll save you till the last!" he snarled at me; then, instead of attacking me he sprang savagely at Rodney, a long, glittering knife in his hand upraised to strike. I struggled with my captors; the effort was futile; they only dug their talons deeper into my flesh.

Poor old Rodney Bond! He fought fiercely, but he made no outcry; overpowered, he faced death unflinchingly, like the man he was! I saw the point of glistening steel press against his breast, and I turned away my head.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHALLENGE.

RODNEY BOND had come to the palace to save the little Princess of Mandalore, but it was she who saved him. I heard the heavy knife clang upon the marble floor, and looking up beheld Lucia Coiffi still grasping the King's hand, from which she had knocked the

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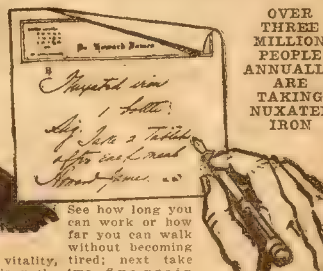

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descending weapon. Against his great height she seemed but a delicate wand; but her eyes flashed with a defiance that spoke of a brave heart and noble intent. She began pacifying the King in the musical, expressive Mandalore language. In his present mood, no other living soul upon the island could have caused him to falter in his purpose to kill Rodney Bond, and then myself; but he listened to her, seeming moved by a potent spell against which he found it impossible to combat.

As she talked to him, pleading, imploring, demanding, the hard lines of his countenance softened; she was remolding him, mind and body, making of the savage something of finer clay and instincts.

Finally he answered her; and I think he must have made her some sort of promise, for she gave us a little wan smile; then, with drooping head, she walked slowly back toward the entrance thru which she had rushed to Rodney's deliverance.

His eyes followed the slim, departing form; and I detected in them something of sadness and secret longing. A moment before I had hated him; now I felt a sort of sympathy and compassion, even tho Rodney's fate and my own were still a matter only of doubt and conjecture. The King's lips moved; I heard him murmur: "Poor, poor little Princess of Mandalore!"

He motioned to us to join him, a little to one side; then with slightly more courtesy than hitherto extended he said bluntly: "Your lives are spared—the Princess demands it; but it grieves me I cannot extend to her what is in my power to give to you two who mean nothing to me!"

I exchanged glances of wonderment with Rodney.

"What's the lay-out now, King?" he spoke up. "Ain't you the boss around here? If Lucia Coiffi is in bad, why don't you help her out—instead of mopin' an' moanin' about it?"

There was the merest suggestion of a smile about his lips as he answered: "On this island one King constitutes a quorum."

"Well, then?"

"But there are certain matters in the conducting of which even the King cannot interfere."

"What do you mean?"

"There are certain traditions and sacred rites, the upholding of which is in the hands of the witch-doctors; and believe me, they're right there all the time! When it comes to anything in their particular line, their hold on the hoi polloi is stronger than mine. Some class to them boys—some class!"

Now, to some it may seem strange—absurd, even—that we would be chatting thus sociably with a semi-barbaric ruler, who but a brief interval before had been bent upon our immediate destruction. Well, it was strange; but what else could we do? We were helpless captives, if he chose to become verbose rather than to remain vindictively murderous, wasn't it our play to stall him along? Truly, it seems so. And right now he was far more concerned with something which pertained to the fate of little Lucia than he was in an ultimate disposal of us. But we distrusted him not one whit less.

"You boys," he resumed, "got off on the wrong foot right at the post. Your visit to the palace was most inopportune; you came messing into things just at a time when these witch-doctors had 'em wrought up to a pitch of unreasonable fury—and it occurred to me that you two, somehow, were mixed up in the affair——"

"What affair, King?" Rodney broke in. "You've got us all wrong. The witch-doctors have gotten Lucia into some sort of trouble, that much is clear. Now, what is it?"

For a moment the ruler of Mandalore remained silent, evidently deciding just how far to commit himself—or rather, perhaps, how far he could trust us.

"She is accused of stealing," he admitted finally.

"Who accuses her?" Rodney demanded.

"Miabelle Nazaro."

"H—mmm! Stealing what?"

"A small idol."

"From where?"

"From the sacred altar in the temple."

This was indeed serious; if these wild, fanatical zealots persisted in this accusation, the natives would readily be thrown into a state of frenzy, and subject her to dangers from which our efforts combined with those of King Bolero could not save her.

"What does Lucia Coiffi say to all this?" I queried.

"She says 'If Miabelle Nazaro is my accuser, you may judge for yourselves whether or not I am guilty!'"

"She will neither affirm nor deny?"

"No."

"And will say nothing further regarding the matter?"

"Not a word."

I made no comment; but I thought to myself: "Good for Lucia Coiffi; that firm little aristocratic chin of hers is not for nothing!"

"Of course," resumed King Bolero, "it is mere headstrong stubbornness on her part, but it is sure (if persisted in) to bring about her death! That is why I am both sad and distraught. If she would only come out and deny taking the idol——"

"You are sure she didn't?" Rodney asked suddenly.

"Absolutely. Why should she do anything of the kind? It is silly to believe such a thing."

"Then the accusations——"

"Were made, I believe," he answered quickly, "thru malice—a desire, created by jealousy, to bring harm to the Princess of Mandalore."

The King, evidently, was wise to the way things stood, all right, in this strange, triangular affair; he knew that Miabelle would more than likely be attempting to pull just some sort of stuff.

"Have you explained this to the witch-doctors and those at the temple who feel most aggrieved?" I asked.

"Yes."

"And their answer?"

"Is this: 'The gods have been outraged. The gods must decide whether Lucia Coiffi is guilty!'"

"This decision is to be made in what manner?"

"By the sacred test."

"And that?"

The King's face grew grave as he answered:

"Near the west shore of this island is a cavern where sacrifices are sometimes offered to the gods. High up on the side of a bluff is an opening for this cavern, and a narrow ledge of rock. A victim who is required to undergo the sacred test is forced at an appointed hour (midnight) to come out upon this ledge, immediately after torches have been lighted upon it. Four of the most expert bowmen on the island are chosen to stand below. At the signal of the witch-doctors they are to shoot straight at the breast of the victim standing above! It is their claim that if the victim has been falsely accused, the long arrows of the archers will fail in their flight—that protection from all harm will be given the innocent one by the gods themselves; but, if guilty, the shafts will strike true, and the form above come tumbling down."

He turned away his eyes as tho reminiscently, as tho viewing again some such actual scene as he had just depicted. "Never yet," he added pensively, "have the arrows failed to fly straight to the bosom of the one accused!"

The horrible truth was out at last. Thru the scheming intrigue and machinations of Miabelle Nazaro, the doom of poor little Lucia was sealed. She would be made to come out from the sacrificial cavern into the glare of the flickering torches, there to stand, a pitiful figure with no chance of life left to her, with only one possible consequence—death!

In the depths of my anxiety at the thought, I clutched the King's arm convulsively. "Can't you in any manner stop this thing—or obtain a respite?"

"No," he answered.

"You have done everything in your power?"

"Everything. Tomorrow night—at midnight—Lucia Coiffi, alone, and clad all in white, must step forth upon the ledge above the archers."

It was horrible; and yet I knew that he spoke only the truth. A sudden inspiration came to me, and I turned to the ruler of Mandalore. "Will you, King Bolero," I said fervidly, "take a message from us back to the witch-doctors and those who plan this wicked thing?"

His eyes fastened upon me searchingly, as tho to read my inmost thoughts and motives. He was not yet sure of us, or of our intentions. Still, he knew that things had gone beyond his restraint and handling; whatever his feelings toward us, he must have sensed the possibility that we might accomplish something while he himself was impotent.

Rodney Bond, jumping at the conclusion that I must have some plan in mind, spoke up eagerly: "Well, King—what do you say?"

"I want to help little Lucia," he answered guardedly.

"Then, King Bolero," I said, "take back this message to them: Say that Rodney Bond and I have been sent to Mandalore, the emissaries of our own gods, chosen to right a great wrong! Tell 'em to go ahead and attempt to pull off their big card just as planned; and at midnight tomorrow night our gods will be right there Johnny-on-the-spot—fighting their gods all the way!"

This thrilling story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

WHAT HECTOR DID.

"Yes," said the man in the smoking car, "there are drawbacks to raising chickens. Yet the buff cochins and Plymouth rocks with which we stocked one end of our suburban estate last spring, showed marked symptoms of domesticity after the first few days, and their addition to the establishment would have proved an unqualified success but for the reprehensible behavior of Burkin's dog.

"Burkin is our neighbor on the left and since early morning his place has been infested by a tall shaggy dog with high, intellectual hips, and an air of utter ennui. Some business associate of Burkin's who was going away for the summer wished the dog on him and then remained away indefinitely presumably hidden in some mountain fastnesses, so he wouldn't have to redeem that overgrown pup. As the weeks rolled by Burkin admitted to me from time to time that the high cost of living in his home had doubled since the dog was added to the outfit, as Hector ate more than he and Mrs. Burkin between them could stow away and was very finicky.

"'I wouldn't like to have the dog look run down when Jimpers gets back home,' he said, when I asked him why he didn't make the brute forage for rations.

"'He might think I didn't appreciate his leaving his pet with me. And, you know, Hector is a good watchdog,' he added.

"'Yes, I've seen him watching you unwrap bundles of meat on the back porch,' I admitted, 'and I think he watches the clock so he'll always be around at mealtime. Beyond that, I haven't any line on his watching ability that would induce me to recommend him.'

"But within a week after our poultry farm had been established and while the taste of new laid eggs was still a refreshing novelty, my wife decided that the hens were sounding false alarms in regard to their prowess in the line of duty.

"Tho they continued to register the laying of eggs in the usual vociferous manner, leading to high expectations on the part of the maid in the kitchen and my wife in the hammock on the front porch, painstaking search of the hennery failed to bring to light more than a third of the expected egg crop. If three hens cackled within an hour there was a slim chance of one egg being discovered, and when a lonesome fowl raised her voice in acclaim it was almost a certainty she was bearing false witness.

"After I had been cheated of my morning egg for several days and had listened for a similar period to the plaints of my household on the subject, I decided to do some detective work the next Sunday morning.

"I rose early and went to guard. The first hen had scarcely cut out the muffler when Durkin's long, lean, hungry dog crawled out from beneath the Burkin porch and, after a luxurious stretch, proceeded to insinuate himself under the fence between Burkin's lot and mine at a spot where a hollow in the ground was concealed by a heavy growth of grass.

"Having thus invaded my premises, Hector strolled over to the henhouse and let himself in thru the little gateway I had fashioned to admit the chickens. In a few moments he came out smiling, and I suspected something nefarious immediately. Without even a glance around him, Hector made his way to the secret hollow under the fence, wriggled thru and ambled toward Burkin's porch.

"I cleared the fence with a graceful bound and rushed down upon Hector as he started into his cave. He turned so quickly that he dropped an egg that he had been carrying in his mouth. Thus his secret was out. I toed him deftly in the spot nearest me, and he made for the street, reporting progress as he went.

"Burkin raised a window and leaned out. 'What on earth's the matter?' he wanted to know. 'Did Hector bite you?'

"'Not yet,' I said, 'but I wish you'd come down and help me pry into his past a bit. I suspect him.'

"Burkin came out, blinking and tousled-looking, and I told him of the morning's revelations.

"'What do you suppose he does—eats them?' he asked.

"'I wouldn't be surprised,' I replied, 'because that dog would eat anything that wouldn't stick in his throat and choke him. But he hasn't started in on this egg yet—let's have a look under the porch.'

"Burkin got a lantern and we climbed in. Hector had twenty-seven eggs stowed away, most of them buried in the sand and a few wrecked in transmission. He was evidently preparing for a hard winter.

"'What do you suppose he did that for?' I asked Burkin later on, when I was filling up the hole by means of which Hector had made his incursions.

"'I don't know,' replied Burkin, thoughtfully, 'but Jimpers told me that Hector was a bird dog.'"

* * *

Quakers in War.

"The Quakers may be depended upon, however, to prove loyal to the nation and to human liberties," writes Horace Maher Lippincott, "even if they show it in as peculiar a way as one of their number who was a ship's captain and lay at anchor in a foreign port. Espying a piratical-looking fellow coming up a rope over the side of the ship, he said:

"'Friend, if thee wants that rope thee can have it,' and he cut the rope, letting the marauder down to a watery grave, quickly and quietly."

* * *

Not So Strange.

At a law court some time ago the case concerned a will, and Pat was the only witness. The lawyer cross-examining Pat asked:

"Was the deceased in the habit of talking to himself when alone?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

"You don't know and yet you pretend that you are or were intimately acquainted with him."

"But the fact is," said Pat, "I didn't ever happen to be with him when he was alone."

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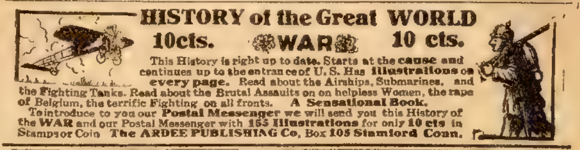

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BURLINGTON WATCH COMPANY 19th Street and Marshall Blvd Dept. B 60. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Wonders of Science.

"Why, hello, there!" greeted the heavy man in the smoking car, breathing heavily. "Did you get on here?"

"Just going to say the same thing to you," replied the thin man, as they dropped into the seat. "I got up early and walked over here from Sunnycrest to meet her."

"Well, bless my heart, that's exactly what I did," puffed the other. "Got here by the skin of my teeth, too."

"It's a good four-mile walk, all right. I must have been just ahead of you. I've been waiting about five minutes. What's the idea, anyway?" asked the thin man.

"Idea—what d'ye mean, idea?' answered his friend. "Ask a fat man what he walks four miles up the track for! The idea is to take off some of this blubber on me."

"You're walkin' to get thin!"

"Doctor told me I'd have to do it every morning."

The thin man was silent a moment. "If that doesn't beat all," he said finally. "I walked in to meet her this morning just because my doctor told me I'd have to get more flesh on me, and he said walkin' would do it. Don't understand it."

"Who's your doctor?" queried the heavy man.

"Doc Adams, over at Sunnycrest," answered the thin man.

"Why, he's my doctor, too!"

"I don't understand it, do you?" said the thin man. "Here I gotta get fat, you gotta get thin. The Doc prescribes same air, same sun, same walk, same everything, for both of us."

"Well, he oughta know," said the heavy man. "But what gets me is why anybody should want to get fat. Nobody loves him—that is, really loves him. They may let him stick around and tolerate him, but what they'd like to do is to take him down to the soap factory and sell him."

"And I've been trying to put on flesh ever since I was a kid," said the thin man. "It's no good. Of course, at that I'm lots heavier than I used to be."

The heavy man looked sideways at his companion. "You ain't exactly overweight now, are you?"

"Oh, I'm up to 115 pounds now. Of course, for my height—five foot eleven—I realize I oughta be heavier. But if you think I'm thin now you oughta seen me ten years ago. I was run down and I was so thin you could hold me up to the light and see what I had for dinner, as if I was a goldfish

"I've tried everything. I eat more than a horse. I'm hungry all the time. And I'm cold all the time.'

"Anyway," said the fat man, "it proves that Doc Adams is a great physician and that medicine is making rapid advances. My boy, we are in the era of the great double-action, self-cocking prescription—the kind that's good for you, no matter what is wrong."

"Yeah," said the thin man. "It's a wonderful age."

* * *

Wood Had Riz.

When a railroad embargo held up eight carloads of potatoes at Vanceboro during the last cold weather of winter, the shippers had trouble in keeping the precious freight from freezing. The cars were heated by stoves, and the supply of firewood was about gone before they could be moved. Inquiry showed that John Myers was about the only man in town who had any wood to spare, so the caretaker of the train went to him and after much urging induced him to haul one sled-load down to the cars.

"How much?" asked the caretaker.

"Wa-al," drawled John, "wood is kind of skurse and high round here. I'll have to get $4 for that load."

"But that's at the rate of $25 a cord!" stormed the potato man. "It's a regular holdup."

"'Taint no more of a holdup than 'taters at $1 a peck when they wasn't $1 a bushel last fall. 'Taters has riz and wood has riz. If you don't want this wood at the present market quotations then back she goes—it's down hill most of the way."

She didn't go back.

* * *

A Hard Blow.

The politician rushed past the official Cerberus into the editorial sanctum.

"What do you mean?" he roared. "What do you mean by insulting me as you did in last night's Clamor?"

"Just a moment," replied the editor. "Didn't the story appear as you gave it to us, namely, that you had resigned as city treasurer?"

"It did. But you put it under the head 'Public Improvements.'"

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words; less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO, ILL.

SALESMEN WANTED

TRAVELING SALESMEN WANTED—EXperience unnecessary. Earn while you learn. Hundreds of good positions open. Write today for large list of openings and testimonials from hundreds of members we have placed in positions paying $100 to $500 a month. Address nearest office. Dept. B-37, National Salesman's Training Ass'n, Chicago, New York, San Francisco.

AGENTS WANTED

I WANT 100 MEN AND WOMEN TO ACT AS my agents and take orders for "Kantleak" raincoats. I paid Eli Bridge $88.95 for orders taken during his spare time in one week. Cooper made $314 last month. Wonderful values. A dandy coat for $3.98. Four average orders a day gives you $2,500 a year profit and an automobile free at the end of six months. No delivering or collecting. I'll give you a sample coat and complete outfit for getting orders. Hurry. Write for my liberal offer. Comer Mfg. Co., 13 Card St., Dayton, Ohio.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO WEAR A BEAUTIful new suit, made to your own measure free, and make $35 to $50 extra every week? [illegible] be the best dressed man in your town [illegible] a lot of extra money if you write at once for our beautiful samples and wonderful offer. The Progress Tailoring Co., Dept. 267, Chicago.

REPRESENTATIVES ARE MAKING $10.00 to $25.00 daily with our new invention. Every home a prospect. We furnish elegant sample case and samples free and give you exclusive territory. Big, permanent seller. Write today. Cosmic Products Company, 355 Valentine St., St. Louis, Mo.

$50 WEEKLY AND UP SELLING MEXICAN Diamonds. Exactly resemble genuine; same rainbow fire; stand tests; sell at sight; repeat orders. Write quick for sample case offer free. Mexican Diamond Importing Co., K J, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

AGENTS — OUR NEW VEST POCKET Check Protector perforates any part of check, does work of forty dollar machine. Retails for one dollar. Send dollar for sample and particulars. McComb Check Protector Co., Frisco, Texas.

LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS REPREsentative to sell shirts, underwear, hosiery, dresses, waists, skirts, direct to homes. Write for free samples. Madison Mills, 503 Broadway, New York City.

NEW PATRIOTIC WAR ATLAS FREE with my 1917 "Business Guide." Sells everywhere. Beginners clear $7 daily. 50% commission. Outfit free. Prof. Nichols, Box B 1, Naperville, Ill.

GET DAVIS' LATEST PROPOSITION, $15.00 daily a cinch. No matter how often you have answered my advertisements in last 20 years, get my 1917 "Prosperity Offer." E. M. Davis, Dept. 609, 900 Lake, Chicago.

$5.00 A DAY EASILY EARNED SELLING Quencho, the marvelous non-alcoholic fruit drink. 25 drinks 25c. Big profits. Agents wanted. Crofts & Reed Co., Dept. C-1, Chicago.

AGENTS SHOW OUR MADE TO ORDER guaranteed $15.00 suits, real $25.00 values. No experience necessary. Wonderful selling plan. You furnish prospects, we make sale Chicago Woolen Mills, Dept. 15, Chicago.

OUR SIMPLEX (KEROSENE) GAS BURNers do away with wood and coal; hundreds of pleased customers; agents coining money; write to-day for exclusive territory. Simplex Gas Plants Co., 9 S. Clinton, Chicago.

PANTS $1.00, SUIT $3.75, MADE TO MEASure. For even a better offer than this write and ask for free samples and styles. Knickerbocker Tailoring Co., Dept. 662, Chicago.

AGENTS — I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

HELP WANTED

WAR MEANS THOUSAND MEN—WOMEN, 18 or over, wanted by Government for permanent clerical positions. $100 month. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for list positions. Franklin Institute, Dept. E 30, Rochester, N. Y.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services are offered here.

WANT A BIGGER JOB? MORE SALARY? Less work? Particulars free. Henry Shaw, Director, 44 Boylston St., Boston, Dept. 10.

HELP WANTED—(Continued)

WANTED—MEN TO BECOME CHAUFfeurs. $25 week. Sample lessons free. Franklin Institute, Dept. E809, Rochester, N. Y.

$500.00 YEARLY RAISING CANARIES. Spare time. Either sex. Particulars free. Mr. Bienzl, Cutler St., Newark, N. J.

MALE HELP WANTED

MEN, BECOME LOCOMOTIVE FIREMEN, brakemen, electric motormen and conductors and earn big money. Hundreds placed to work, $75 and $100 month. No experience necessary. Write at once. Inter Railway Dept. (A), Majestic Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY MAIL, POST OFfice, rural carrier "exams" everywhere soon. Get prepared by former Government civil service examiner. Booklet free. Arthur Robert Patterson, Rochester, N. Y.

DON'T PREPARE FOR ANY CIVIL SERVice examination without seeing our catalogue. Columbian Correspondence College, Washington, D. C.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, 8 hours, $140. Colored porters wanted everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 686 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ills.

$20.00 WEEKLY MADE WRITING NAMES for mail order houses. No canvassing. Particulars for stamp. The Guide Company, Memphis, Tenn

BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPORtunity, good pay, travel. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

GIVEN TO ANY WOMAN. BEAUTIFUL 100 piece gold dec. dinner set for distributing (not selling) only 5 doz. pkgs. Diamond Dust Soap Powder free among friends. No money or experience needed. New Method Mfg. Co., 728-734 N. Franklin St., Chicago.

WOMEN — START DRESSMAKING — DEsigning business in your homes. Earn $100 month. Sample lessons free. Franklin Institute, Dept. E 854, Rochester, N. Y.

FIVE BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES TO travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. $25 to $50 per week. Railroad fare paid. Goodrich Drug Company, Dept. 85, Omaha, Neb.

$20 WEEKLY; STAMPING PATTERNS AT home. Send stamp. Chicago Silk Mills Dept. M. M Chicago

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

INVESTORS MAGAZINE FREE TO YOU. $10 invested with us has made others $290.00 in few months. "Hoffman's Investment Journal" tells how this was done. This magazine gives facts about the real earning power of money. Tells how many have started on the road to fortune. We will send it three months free. If you want to make money, write for this magazine today. Hoffman Trust Company, 677 Carter Building, Houston, Texas.

$1 MAY START YOU TO FORTUNE. GET your share of millions being paid in oil dividends. An interest in our cooperative well may earn you $100 monthly. Full information, complete maps free. Write our Mid-Western offices today. Sourlake Texas Oil Co., O 2823 Ann, St. Louis, Mo

$20 BUYS DEED TO LAND, ALSO INTERest in oil well that should pay you $100 for every dollar invested; payments $2 monthly; complete information free. Address Texas-Gulf Company, 1105 Union Bank, Houston, Texas

INVEST IN GOLD AND SILVER MINES, showing promise of raising another crop of millionaires. Address Midwest Investment Bureau, 683 Boston Block, Minneapolis, Minn.

REAL ESTATE

A SMALL FARM IN CALIFORNIA WILL make you more money with less work. You will live longer and better. Delightful climate. Rich soil. Hospitable neighbors. Good roads, schools and churches. Write for our San Joaquin Valley illustrated folders free. C. L. Seagraves, Industrial Commissioner, AT&SF Ry., 1931 Ry. Exch., Chicago.

MISSOURI LANDS

HOMESEEKERS DESIRING LAND FOR homes or investment will receive valuable information and map of Missouri by addressing Immigration Bureau, Station A, Springfield, Missouri.

FARM LANDS FOR SALE

LANDSEEKERS! TEN ACRES MEANS INdependence. Get one of my excellent tracts that I am selling for only $250, $5 down, $4 monthly. Adapted for poultry, vegetables, fruit; near towns, schools; good transportation. Best county in Michigan. Also larger tracts. Write for free booklet. George W. Swigart, owner, X1245 First National Bank Bldg., Chicago, Illinois.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

$35.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY, SMALL CAPITAL starts you. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog free. Atlas Moving Picture Co., Franklin Bldg., Chicago.

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS

SEND US YOUR IDEAS FOR PHOTOPLAYS, stories, etc. We accept them in any form—correct free—sell on commission. Big rewards. Make money. Get details now. Writer's Selling Service, Box 10, Auburn, N. Y

OLD COINS WANTED

CASH PAID FOR OLD MONEY OF ALL kinds; $5.00 for certain eagle cents; $7.00 for certain 1853 quarters, etc. Send 4c. Get large illustrated coin circular. May mean your large profit. Send now. Numismatic Bank, Dept. 12, Fort Worth, Texas.

TOBACCO HABIT

TOBACCO HABIT CURED BY HARMLESS recipe. Sent free. Superba Co., FA, Baltimore, Md

PATENTS

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. Actual search and patentability report free. Send sketches and description, or model, of your invention. My patent sales service gets full value. 1917 edition ninety-page patent book free. George P. Kimmel, 260 Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

"PATENTS AND PATENT POSSIBILITIES" is a 72-page treatise telling what to invent and where to sell it. Manufacturers constantly writing for patents. Help supply the demand. Books free. H. S. Hill, 933 McLachlen Building, Washington, D. C.

WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK of some simple thing to patent? Protect your ideas, they may bring you wealth. Write for "Needed Inventions," "Patent Buyers," and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

INVENT SOMETHING. YOUR IDEAS MAY bring wealth. Free book tells what to invent and how to obtain a patent through our credit system. Talbert & Parker, 4276 Talbert Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS THAT PROTECT. ADVICE AND books free. Highest references. Watson E. Coleman, Patent Lawyer, 624 F St., Washington, D. C.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

WRITERS!—STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc., are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, B4, Hannibal, Mo.

SONG POEMS

SONG WRITERS' "MANUAL AND GUIDE" free! We compose and facilitate free publication or sale. Submit poems. Knickerbocker Studios, 112 Gaiety Bldg., New York.

INVENTIONS

INVENTIONS COMMERCIALIZED ON CASH and royalty basis. Inventors and manufacturers write at once. Adam Fisher Mfg. Co., 2044 Railway Exchange, St. Louis, Mo.

MISCELLANEOUS

SEND NAME, RECEIVE FREE OFFERS from landowners everywhere. A Mohler, Box 453, Chicago.

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PERSONAL

A LETTER TO DR. ROWE THE SPECIAList will obtain his latest book on symptoms and cure for varicocele, stricture and urinary diseases. Every man should have it; postage 4 cents. Send today. Dr. Rowe, 112 N. Pearl St., Buffalo, N. Y.

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MARRY RICH, BE HAPPY AND PROSPERous. Big list of descriptions and photos of congenial people with means free. Sealed, confidential. Either sex. Standard Club, Box 607, Grayslake, Ill.

GREATEST HIT, GET IT. "GO, MY SON, God Bless You," 15c, orchestra 20c. Read "Senam," the spirit voice of the mysterious Hindoo mystic 25c. Sovereign Pub. Co., 160 Sycamore, Buffalo, N. Y.

EVERYBODY SUFFERING PILES, FISTULA, fissures, ulceration, bleeding, itching, write free trial. Positive painless pile cure. S. U. Tarney, Auburn, Ind

MARRY — FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY IF LONELY; HUNDREDS RICH; confidential; reliable; descriptions free. The Successful Club, Mrs. Purdie, Box 556, Oakland, Calif.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH BOOK OF MOSES, Egyptian Secrets and many other rare books. Catalog 2c. Star Novelty Co., E 201, Camden, N. J.

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GENT'S ARTICLE — SOMETHING NEW — send 4c for 25c sample. Rick Co., (K) Logansport, Ind.

MARRY—PHOTOS, DESCRIPTIONS FREE. All honest advertisers. No fakes. Alpha Rice, (B2) Charlotte, Michigan.

SECRETS, MAGIC, MYSTERY, MIND READing. Send only 20c for this $1 book. Send now D. Union Book Co., Palatine, Ill

MARRY RICH, HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO marry. Descriptions and photos free. E. Unity, Grand Rapids, Mich.

GET MARRIED—BIG PAPER WITH ALL names, addresses, descriptions, photos 25c. Wren, 45, Grand Rapids, Mich.

CHRISTWOUNDMARKED ANNE CATH. Emmerich and Visions. 250 pages, bound, for 20c. Klein Co., Brandon, Minn.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL PAper published. Free for stamp. Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE; BEST PUBlication for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency, 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

GET MARRIED; LARGE, HANDSOMELY illustrated matrimonial magazine mailed free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879

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5,000,000
READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Forgetfulness is the noblest remedy for injuries

Some headaches are natural and some are acquired

Some people are always up and doing —other people

He is truly wise who gains wisdom at the expense of others

At 40 a man wishes he knew as much as he thought he knew at 20

If you have a little success don't camp on it for the rest of your life

One rich lawyer is a monument to many fools and obstinate men.

Satan is the father of lies, and matrimony is the mother of excuses

Men sometimes think they understand women, but men sometimes are very foolish.

If you would know what kind of temper a woman has, take a wet dog into her parlor.

No wise girl marries a good-looking man, for he would monopolize the family mirror

Men admire a handsome man when he has good sense—but they usually suspect that he hasn't

A baseball nine is called a team, but it is quite improper to tell what the umpire is called

Most photographers would have to shut up shop if people could see themselves as others see them

As soon as a man discovers that he has made a mistake he begins to look around for some one to blame it on

No man is so strong or great that he is not afraid of somebody. The chances being that the somebody is a woman.

If a man shows his teeth and smiles he will attain his object much quicker than if he shows his teeth and growls.

Many a man whose marriage was the result of love at first sight wishes that he had been blessed with the gift of second sight.

Getting up in the morning with a grudge against the world does not worry the world and gets you in bad all around the clock.

One form of innocence consists in wondering how it happens that the girl with the prettiest ankles wears the shortest skirt

A writer says that the man who trusts another educates him. If he keeps on trusting he will also add to his own stock of knowledge

When a man is dressed in a little brief authority he is even more conspicuous than a woman in the present style of abbreviated skirt

More women would be interested in the suffrage movement if it was something that could be decorated with ribbons and hung up over the mantel

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

The necessity for economy has given a certain simplicity to fashion which is a great advantage.

The foulard of blue ground and white satin dots should have a white muslin underblouse, embroidered

The long black silk coats are being revived and will probably be great favorites on account of their general usefulness

The feminine eye cannot fail to be attracted to the dainty new tea gowns and boudoir gowns, which were never more lovely than they are this season. There is a distinct revival of the essentially feminine, daintily tinted boudoir gowns of flesh-colored georgette crepe or crepe de chine combined with a coatee of wide, sheer lace flouncing. Occasionally georgette crepe is used beneath the flouncing to give the coatee a little more stability

The French have found the French heels; they have high sturdy, Spanish heels going from ground to foot on a straight line that entirely supports the body and keeps the spine in a correct position. They have shortened the vamp of the shoe so that it allows free play to the spring of the foot where the toes begin and they have rounded the vamp as nature rounded the foot at that place. Their feet not only look better than they have looked in a century, but the French women are learning to enjoy walking

NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

Nearly every woman has laid away some of the old-fashioned waists opened in the back, with beautiful embroidered fronts. Cut out front of waists, shape them into tea aprons, hem edges and sew on narrow lace, put on binding and you have a dainty little apron, with but little work. The sleeves can be made into little handkerchiefs for the children

Any one who has any spare time can devote it pleasantly and usefully by making pillow cases. They can be made much cheaper than bought and with little or no trouble. You can buy pillow tubing for 25 cents a yard. Two yards will make a pair. Draw very evenly two rows of shallow scallops around the opening. Be careful that you measure them evenly so that you will not have uneven scallops at the ends. That done, crochet a double edging without hemming the case. For 60 cents you can make a handsome pair of pillow cases. If desired one or more initials could be embroidered in the center above the crocheted edge.

RECIPES.

RHUBARB CAKE—Cream together one cup of sugar and one-half cup of shortening. Add salt and spice to taste, one cup of raisins. Stir one teaspoonful of soda into one cup of unsweetened rhubarb and beat well. Add one and three-fourth cups of sifted pastry flour. Bake in a loaf. With the addition of citron this makes a rich fruit cake

FRENCH BEANS—Boil the beans in the usual way, drain them, then put them into a saucepan with a good-sized lump of butter; toss over the fire for a few minutes, then add a teaspoonful of chopped parsley, a teaspoonful of flour rubbed into a smooth batter with two tablespoonfuls of milk, pepper and salt to taste; let them remain on the stove for five minutes, shaking frequently to prevent burning

BAKED EGGS—Separate as many eggs as you desire to serve, saving yolks whole. For whites of six eggs add one even teaspoon baking powder and beat dry. Butter gem pans or any molds, divide the white mixture to correspond to the number of yolks. Put the white part in the molds, then drop the yolks (whole) in center of white, sprinkle with salt and pepper, dot with bits of butter and bake a light brown. The idea of the baking powder is to keep them from falling after they are baked. Should you use gem pans and do not use them all, put a little water in the unused ones to keep from burning the tin.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

When ironing linen, move the iron with the threads, never diagonally.

Use water that the vegetables are cooked in for cream soup. Save the water that the rice is boiled in and use it in place of milk for these soups and creamed vegetables

Remove tea and coffee stains with boiling water. Remove chocolate stains with borax and cold water. Remove grass stains with ammonia and water. Remove medicine stains by soaking in alcohol. Remove whitewash with strong vinegar

When you want to shut off the view from any window you can do it cheaply by dissolving in a little hot water as much epsom salts as the water will absorb. Paint over the window while hot, and when dry you will have a good imitation of ground glass.

The wire foundation of the modern bedstead soon ruins a hair or wool mattress unless some steps are taken to prevent the mischief. Either the wire portion must be covered over with coarse canvas or holland, or with sheets of strong brown paper. In the former case the material must be attached to the wire by tapes; in the latter fasten with safety pins.

FOOD CONSERVATION.

The thrift and conservation committee has issued the following suggestions along the line of food conservation:

1. Plan at one time for two or three meals
2. Use few materials for any one meal.
3. Use different methods of preparing the same article.
4. Balance light soup by heavier main course.
5. Alternate salad and dessert. Do not have both at same meal.
6. Make contrast between courses.
7. Avoid monotony in texture, color or preparation.
8. Serve enough, but not too much.

The following menus show the use of four common foods, beef, cabbage, apples and potatoes, for twelve meals differently prepared each time. This is a satisfactory and feasible way of obtaining a pleasing variety

No. 1

Porterhouse steak. Mashed potato.
Cabbage salad with nuts.
Baking powder biscuit.
Apple pie. Coffee.

No. 2.

Tongue. Cabbage and potato salad.
Popover. Apple turnover with cream.
Tea.

No. 3.

Roast ribs of beef. Baked potatoes.
Cabbage salad (sour cream dressing.)
Plain bread. Baked apples with cream
Coffee

No. 4.

Creamed dried beef. Stuffed potatoes.
Creamed cabbage with peppers
Brown Betty with cream.
Graham muffins. Coffee.

No. 5.

Shepherd's pie. Creamed cabbage.
White Muffins
Apple souffle with whipped cream.
Cocoa.

No. 6.

Corned beef. Boiled potatoes.
Boiled cabbage.
Butter rolls. Apple pudding. Coffee.

No. 7.

Short ribs.
French fried potatoes Steamed cabbage.
Apple dumplings and cream
Graham gems Coffee.

No. 8

Rolled stuffed steak. Browned potatoes.
Hot slaw
Baked apples, cream, jelly nuts. Coffee.

No. 9.

Hamburg steak. Riced potatoes.
Escalloped cabbage. Graham bread.
Apple tapioca. Coffee.

No. 10.

Corned beef hash.
Potatoes with butter and parsley.
Cabbage au gratin. Entire wheat muffins.
Dutch apple pie, lemon sauce. Tea.

No. 11.

Beef loaf. Creamed potatoes
Cold slaw. Nut bread.
Dutch apple cake with cream. Coffee.

No. 12.

Pan broiled flank steak.
Escalloped potatoes.
Fried cabbage. French rolls.
Apple short cake and cream. Cocoa.

HEALTH NOTES.

Give your scalp and hair plenty of ventilation. Do this at night, allowing the hair to fall over the shoulders. Shake it out and sometimes give it a sunning, also on a mild day sit before an open window and shake out the hair.

To be beautiful is sometimes the result of a simple course of behavior, including a little sleep, a little exercise, a little outdoor life in the sunlight with buoyant, joyous behavior, deep breathing, frequent baths, open bowels, light food and an absence of any disturbance in any other structure anywhere inside or outside.

After meals it is well to rest for a short time—a quarter to half an hour. This is specially necessary after the chief meal, and many people are accustomed to take a short nap after dinner. If the sleep is only a short one—not exceeding half an hour—there is no objection to it. But if the sleep is permitted to last one or two hours it is decidedly bad, both for digestion and health.

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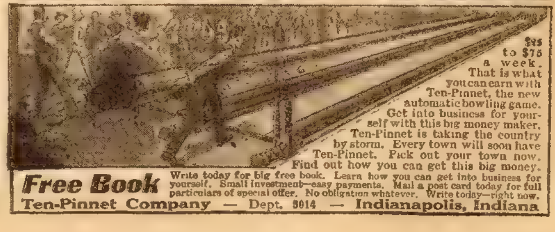

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PICTUREGAME EDITOR, THE FARMING BUSINESS, 500 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

King's Mountain Boys

Or, Under Liberty's Banner

By Captain Jack Judson

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CHAPTER XV.

ETHAN SAVES MISTRESS BOYCE.

THE ride of Helen Boyce to the mountain rendezvous was without exciting incident. The girl felt that she was carrying an important message to the patriot camp, and she urged her steed thru the night with high hopes of giving timely aid.

She had out-tricked Cornwallis' courier, and more than once she wondered, as she rode thru the gaps in the hills and along the darkened ways, what Dick Manchester would say should he discover how he had been deceived. "All's fair in war," was the thought that often surged thru her mind.

While a part of the country was unknown to her, she knew the lay of the land, and when at last she came in sight of the camp in the gray light of early dawn, her heart throbbed wildly, and she rode more slowly. She was safe at last, and the precious dispatch had escaped the watchful eyes of the foes of liberty.

Her appearance in the camp was unexpected, and to none more so tnan to Ethan. The young leader of the liberty league could hardly believe his eyes when he beheld the fair partisan riding toward him. He looked twice before he concluded that she was flesh and blood and not an apparition.

Helen reined in Naomi's horse, and gazed down into Ethan's face with a smile on her lips.

"You were not looking for me, Master Byrd?" she exclaimed.

"Not at all, Mistress Boyce," answered the youth. "Something out of the ordinary must have occurred to bring you to the camp."

Helen nodded.

"We are about to take up the march after Colonel Ferguson," continued Ethan. "Indeed, marching orders have been given, and our forces have gathered for the fray."

"And where, pray," asked the girl, "do you expect to find your enemy?"

"According to the latest reports, he is near King's Mountain, and, unless he alters his route, we shall meet him there."

"What, think you, would cause him to change his route?"

"Nothing but orders from Cornwallis, our leaders says."

"Well, Master Byrd, such orders have been issued."

"How know you this?" cried Ethan, mystified.

"I have the orders word for word in my head."

Ethan's astonishment increased.

"I have had the good fortune to catch sight of the Earl's dispatch."

"You, Mistress Boyce? I did not know that Earl Cornwallis ever let you into his confidence."

"It is the last thing the doughty Englishman would do," again smiled Helen. "There are tricks in war, you know, Ethan?"

"Plenty of them," replied the young partisan. "But I cannot conceive how you have been able to get possession of the war message."

"It is a story perhaps worth the telling, but first I must deliver my message to your leader."

Ethan escorted her to Colonel Shelby, and stepped aside while she related her story. The rough face of the borderer voiced his satisfaction over the news, and Ethan saw Helen flush under the unstinted praise which Shelby heaped upon her.

"This is very important," said the old frontiersman. "If Ferguson should obey the Earl and change his route, we shall be ready for him, but he is somewhat headstrong, and I think will carry out his own plans. I am quite sure we shall find him on the summit of King's Mountain."

"Wherever you find him, I trust victory will perch upon your banners!" exclaimed Helen.

Shelby proudly waved his hand toward the somewhat motley array of patriots who were making the final preparations for the battle.

"We are not dressed like Colonel Ferguson's men," said he, with a smile, "but I am confident that every man will give an account of himself. Not a few of our men have met redcoats before, and the terror the King's men once inspired has passed away."

"I am glad to hear that," answered Helen. "I have been thinking that if you could trap Ferguson, Lord Cornwallis would not feel so confident of subjugating the Colonies."

"You are right, Mistress Boyce. I believe that the God of battles is with us in this holy struggle for freedom, and that, altho we have met with reverses lately at Camden, we shall in the end establish a new liberty-loving government on this continent."

Helen now turned away and rejoined Ethan, to whom she related how she had tricked the British courier.

"It was a trick well played," said Ethan, growing enthusiastic over her narrative. "But it is just like you, Mistress Boyce. You can ride homeward with the satisfaction of having rendered our cause a great service."

"You boys are all here?" she asked.

"All but Tommy Lutz. He has strangely disappeared."

A mystified look came at once into the girl's eyes.

"I was not aware that he was serving with you."

"He was, but perhaps he concluded to go back to his old allegiance to the King."

"You have seen nothing more of Captain Rough since your escape from Colonel Ferguson's camp?"

"No, but the infamous Double T has fallen into our hands, and the Colonels have already dealt out justice to him."

Helen understood and did not press Ethan for a further explanation.

All at once a shrill cry burst upon their ears, and both turned toward the direction from which it had come. A horse was seen approaching at full speed, and while Ethan looked, he descried a jacketless youth on the animal's back, waving his hand in the air excitedly.

"Here comes the truant now!" the young patriot exclaimed, and then he centered his gaze on Tommy Lutz, who had already spied them.

"I'm worth ten pounds at least!" rang out the voice of Master Lutz. "Ten pounds in good and lawful money of the King!"

Tommy halted before the astonished couple and wiped the grime of hard riding from his face.

"You are worth more than ten pounds to our cause, Tommy," observed Ethan, laughing.

"But just think of it, Ethan, ten pounds in gold, stamped with the royal face!" put in the boy. "And it's been paid, too."

"But where is your jacket?" asked Ethan.

"I left it at Master Meccam's house," was the reply. "When a fellow has urgent business elsewhere he is apt to forget some things. I had been stripped for Master Meccam's whip, but I concluded that I would not receive his compliments."

Thereupon Tommy related his adventure, to which Ethan and Helen listened with bated breath.

"We shall visit Master Meccam some time," Ethan said. "When we do, Tommy, you may recover your coat."

"You don't think Master Davy will frame it and hang it on his wall with the family portraits?"

"He is not apt to do that, Tommy, altho there is more honor in your jacket than in some of the faces that adorn the house on the hill."

Master Lutz nodded accord.

When he was told of Helen's adventures he looked into her eyes and laughed.

"She'd make a good member of our little band, don't you think, Ethan?" he exclaimed.

"A most excellent member, Tommy, but Mistress Boyce must not set herself up as a target for Ferguson's riflemen."

To this speech Helen made no reply, and the three passed to the center of the camp.

There was much to interest the young girl in the preparations for the march. Never before had she seen so many armed men. She saw some of the mountaineers affixing sprigs of hemlock to their hats, and took hope from their eagerness.

"I shall ride back with you a short distance," Ethan said, addressing her.

"It is quite unnecessary, Ethan," was the reply, which was not spoken with much emphasis. "I am quite sure of my way."

"But there are roving bands of Tories in the neighborhood," persisted Ethan. "You need not set out till near the close of day. I will accompany you to the ford. After that I believe you will have clear riding."

"As you will, Ethan, if you are determined," Helen answered, with a pleased expression. "I need not take the same route back, you know."

It was getting late in the afternoon when the young couple rode from the mountain rendezvous side by side. The October day was one of the most beautiful description. The high forests garbed in the lovely dress of fall were enough to enchant them with the scene. Birds of brilliant plumage were everywhere, and overhead was a clear sky which seemed to presage a safe journey for the fair Whig.

They came at length to a little stream which sang its way thru the entrancing landscape and in the middle of which they paused to let their animals drink.

"Now that Captain Rough is not in the neighborhood and Double T has been hanged," said Helen, "I would not know where to find a foe in this region."

"There are lurking foes of liberty everywhere," Ethan responded. "In truth, one is not safe anywhere."

Ethan had hardly spoken ere there came to their ears a harsh command, and three horsemen dashed from the timber on the other side of the stream.

"Tories!" cried the youth.

"We have you!" shouted the foremost rider, as all three horses galloped forward. "Surrender in the name of the King!"

Ethan's hand tightened at once on the rifle he carried. Helen's face was shot with a spasm of fear. The boy's teeth were hard set as he leaned toward his companion and gripped the bridle rein of her animal. He turned its head in a jiffy and at the same time spoke to Dick.

"We can outride the rascals," he said with a hasty glance at Helen.

The discomfited Tories uttered cries of exasperation when they discovered that their commands were not to be obeyed, and the following moment the two horses dashed from the water and were racing down the woodland way at full speed.

A shot rang out behind the fugitives, but the ball whistled harmlessly over their heads. Neither spoke as they tore along with the enemy in full chase.

Mistress Boyce sat her steed like one accustomed to such riding, and Ethan's face grew tense as he observed that she had recovered her spirits.

The soft, carpet-like nature of the forest trail drowned the clattering of the hoofs behind the pair, but Ethan did not have to look back to know that they were still thundering after them. Capture seemed inevitable.

"You have a good steed there?" he said, looking at Helen.

"It is Naomi's Bess and I doubt not she has raced before now."

It was already apparent to Ethan Byrd that the Tories' mounts were beasts of endurance, and he feared that Naomi's pet, being much smaller, would not be able to hold out. As for Dick, he knew what he could do, for he had been tried on previous occasions, and he therefore watched the animal at his side with a good deal of solicitude.

A mile had been raced thru the soft afternoon when Ethan saw signs of fatigue in Bess. He turned halfway round on his horse and looked back.

Their enemies were tearing along, confident of victory, and for a moment the boy watched them keenly.

"Take the right-hand trail yonder," he said in low tones to his companion.

"But you, Etnan?"

"Never mind me," was the reply. "Quick! The trail divides here."

Helen, with another look at Ethan, silently obeyed, and the pursuing Tories raised a shout as they saw her ride to the right.

As the flying figures of horse and girl grew dim, Ethan deliberately faced about and confronted the Tories. The foremost seemed to draw rein, but the others, thundering in his wake, pressed him forward. Ethan raised his rifle and covered the trio.

"Halt!" he exclaimed.

"Surrender!" came back in response. "We surrender to no young Rebel in arms against the King."

Out flashed the weapon at the boy's shoulder, and the foremost foe, toppling in his saddle, fell heavily to the ground. This caused the others to halt for a moment, and as the riderless horse darted aside, they uttered shouts of vengeance.

Ethan turned his animal's head and darted after Helen, the while reloading his rifle after a trick he had learned during his mountain life. He looked back after accomplishing his work, and caught sight of the two Tories once more. Dick was faced around again, and Ethan waited for the onset.

On they came, and as they rode into rifle range, the boy fired. A horse spun halfway round, and his rider was thrown to the ground.

"A horse means as much as a man in times like this!" the young mountaineer said to himself. "Now, good Dick, for the last lap of the chase."

The unhorsed Tory and his lone companion looked at each other and dolefully shook their heads. The boy was to be feared. Ethan's trick of reloading his rifle had disconcerted them, and they hesitated to continue the pursuit, handicapped as they now were.

Their impotent cries of rage died away on the drowsy air. Ethan cast one look behind him and saw that the chase had ended, but this did not check his speed.

In a tangle of forest he came suddenly upon Helen, who had drawn rein and was anxiously awaiting him.

"I feared for you, Ethan!" she cried, as he came up. "I thought it best to rest Bess here——"

"And wait for the Tories?" laughed the youth.

"No, for you, Ethan, if fortune favored you."

"I think I have ended the chase," the

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boy went on, with a smile. "At least two of the enemy are down."

With rifle ready and eyes on the alert, Ethan waited for a renewal of the chase, but it did not come. The Tories had had enough of the encounter, and were not to be seen.

"Now, Mistress Boyce, we will try the lower trail," the young partisan observed. "I will ride with you till all danger is passed, and then farewell till we have humbled Ferguson."

They struck out in another direction, shunning the scene of the surprise, and at length Ethan drew rein and pointed ahead.

"I know where I am now," said Helen, looking into his face. "I am from this moment on familiar ground."

Ethan held out his hand, and wondered not a little at the pressure which it received.

"Good-by," said Helen. "I may some day be able to requite you for your bravery."

"We will not speak of that," answered Ethan, as a deep flush overspread his face. "Remember, we will not meet again till we have vanquished the eagles on King's Mountain."

Helen returned a smile, and then Ethan, with a last look at his fair friend, went back to the mountain rendezvous.

CHAPTER XVI.

ETHAN SPARES A FOE.

ETHAN rode cheerfully back, conscious of having done a trustworthy act in saving Helen from the hands of the Tories. He was now ready to take his place in the mountain army which had been raised in many quarters for the onslaught on Colonel Ferguson. It was a gallant little force of about one thousand men, who had been gathered from the headwaters of the Cumberland, from the region of the Broad and the Saluda. They had left their homes to punish the invaders of their country, and every man had resolved not to retrace his steps until he had carried out his purpose. The patriots were mounted on their own horses, animals that knew their masters' voices, and each had traveled the mountain paths before.

When Ethan rode into the camp he was hailed by Jason, who had missed him. The old scout came forward with a satisfied smile on his bronzed face.

"I've been looking for you everywhere!" he exclaimed, as he laid his hand on Ethan's knee and looked up into his face.

"Well, you see I'm back, good Jason," smiled the boy. "I've had a little adventure of my own," and thereupon he related his experience with the three Loyalists.

"I always knew you were able to hold your own!" cried Jason. "That was a neat affair, my boy. Two Tories down? They won't trouble us any more."

"I trust not, Jason."

"Tommy is quite himself again," pursued the scout. "He and Red Fox have become cronies, and I'm glad to see the young Otari take up with the boys."

It had been arranged that the little army of resistance should break camp and march at midnight. Therefore Ethan and his companions had nothing to do but wait for the hour.

The young partisan was watching the men decorate their hats, when a hand dropped lightly upon his arm, and he turned to confront Red Fox, the Indian.

"Red Fox go and see what he can find," fell from the youth's lips.

"Not now!" said Ethan, with some sternness. "We shall move in a short time——"

"Red Fox not be gone long," persisted the Otari.

"What is in the wind?" anxiously asked Ethan, for the young redskin seemed bursting with eagerness.

"Serpents in the grass," answered the Indian, in low tones.

"What, enemies on the confines of the camp?"

Red Fox nodded.

"Then I will go with you," said Ethan.

The Indian resolutely shook his head.

"Red Fox has found the grass crawlers before," said he.

"But," insisted Ethan, "what if they should be too many for you? We can't afford to lose you now, boy."

"Little white chief no lose Red Fox," and with this the speaker whirled about and was gone.

"Let him go," thought Ethan. "If he is determined to risk his scalp it shall be his own lookout."

A short time passed, and again Ethan felt the same hand on his arm.

"Red Fox back," exclaimed the Indian boy, as his eyes seemed to beam with victory.

"And what did you find?"

"The serpent in the grass."

Ethan started.

"I can't believe it, Red Fox!" he cried. "You certainly haven't been far away."

"Serpent very near," smiled the red youth.

"Why didn't you fetch him in with you?"

"Will the little chief come and see?"

Eager to discover what had taken Red Fox from camp, Ethan followed him from the spot, and was conducted more than a mile from the camp. An old hut loomed before their eyes.

"There's no serpents here, boy!" exclaimed the youthful partisan. "I see nothing but the old hut."

Red Fox advanced and laid his hand on the loosened latch. The place was dark inside. Ethan stood in the doorway and tried to make out the interior, but the gloom prevented.

"Serpent in the corner," whispered Red Fox at his ear.

Ethan produced his flints and tinder box and struck a light. As the tow flared up the darkness was suddenly dispelled. Over in the corner was the semblance of a human being.

"I see why you didn't fetch the prisoner into camp," Ethan exclaimed, turning to his companion.

"Him just tied," grinned Red Fox.

"So he is," and Ethan, holding the light before him, advanced across the creaking floor and leaned forward.

The man squatted in the corner of the dingy place, blinking in the light, and the moment Ethan got a good view of his face he fell back a step and exclaimed:

"Captain Rough!"

"Yes, and to have been captured by that young redskin makes my heart ache!" came from the bearded lips of the Indian's prisoner.

"I cannot say that you have my sympathies, Captain," returned Ethan. "If you had remained with Colonel Ferguson you would not have fallen into Red Fox's clutches."

Captain Rough growled and half averted his face.

"So you've turned spy?" pursued the mountain boy.

"What concern is that of yours?" was the snappish answer. "You served me a pretty trick when I had you safe and sound in Colonel Ferguson's camp a while back."

"Do you think a caged bird is not always looking for a weak bar in his cage, my dear Captain?"

"Never mind what my thoughts are. Colonel Ferguson took me to task for your escape, and I told him I would make amends. To be plain with you, boy, if that young Indian hadn't found me I would have turned the tables on you."

"It's a marvel he left you alive where I find you," Ethan retorted.

"For which I will give him no thanks. He took me unawares and pounced upon me like a young wild cat, and before I could resist I was in his hands."

It did Ethan but little good to see Captain Rough in the condition he was. He would have preferred to meet his old enemy in battle, and more than once he had hoped he would have that opportunity when Tory and Rebel came together on King's Mountain. Now, if Captain Rough were taken to the mountain camp he would suffer the same fate which had been meted out to Double T, and this would deprive Ethan of a chance to cross arms with him in fair fight.

The Tory marauder seemed to divine the thoughts that flitted thru the youth's mind.

"You're going to take me to your leaders to be hanged like a dog, I suppose?" he cried, staring at Ethan.

"You richly deserve a noose for your many deeds of cruelty," was the response. "You came hither as a spy, and you know how spies are dealt with."

"I came here in a double capacity," said Captain Rough, abating none of his savagery. "I came to keep tab on the mountain army and to find you, my boy."

"Well," grimly answered Ethan, "you have found me, thanks to my young friend here."

"Really, boy, wouldn't you rather fight Captain Rough fairly than send him to a hound's death?"

"That I would!" cried Ethan, instantly.

"Then give me, enemy that I am, a chance."

"You shall have a chance."

Ethan had transferred his light to a candle which the roving gaze of Red Fox had unearthed in the cabin, and now he turned once more to the Tory.

"What sort of chance do you crave?" he inquired.

"The moon is coming over the hills," said Captain Rough. "There is a fair light outside."

"Well?"

"Mark off so many paces——"

"And give you a chance to escape, or to slay me when we are on the eve of finding our prey in the mountain?"

"It shall be a fair encounter——"

"Fairer than some you have given the Whigs, eh?"

Captain Rough winced.

"The Indian took my rifle," he resumed, a moment later. "You can station the young redskin near me, and if I attempt to escape I shall become his target."

"No," answered Ethan, resolutely, "I will do nothing of the kind. I fight no duels, Captain Rough. I would sooner sever your bonds and await my time."

"Just as you please," and the speaker settled back into the corner. "I thought you had courage, boy."

"I can meet an enemy in fair and honest fight, but I will not engage in a duel."

"Scruples, I see," laughed Captain Rough, tauntingly. "Then, if you will not fight me by moonlight, I dare you to cut my bonds and wait for the chance you speak of."

With a glance at Red Fox, Ethan took the hunting knife from his belt and stepped forward.

"The little chief shall not let the serpent crawl away!" remonstrated the Otari, clutching the youth's arm.

"But they will hang him in the camp, Red Fox."

"He belongs to Red Fox, the son of Panther Face."

"Give him to me," pleaded Ethan, who had a certain idea in his mind.

For a moment the young Indian gazed silently at Ethan and then fell back.

"Red Fox likes the little white chief," he said. "He can take the Tory serpent."

With this Red Fox turned his back to Ethan and walked away.

"Now, Captain Rough," resumed the youth, "since you belong to me, I shall release you on one condition."

"What is that?"

"If you will promise to go back to Colonel Ferguson and meet me in open battle when the two forces engage, you shall have your liberty."

"I'll do that!" exclaimed the rough-faced man, wonderstruck at Ethan's clemency. "I'll bide that time."

Ethan moved a little closer, and by one stroke severed the bonds that secured the prisoner. Captain Rough rose to his feet and gazed at his liberator in silence.

"I ask you to keep back nothing you may have observed," Ethan continued. "You are at liberty to tell Colonel Ferguson all you have discovered. Nothing can now prevent our finding him."

"And nothing can stop the vengeance of Cornwallis' great lieutenant!"

"We will test that later on in battle," the youth replied.

Captain Rough moved toward the door.

"The young Indian has my arms," he said, looking at the boy.

"And Red Fox shall keep his trophies," was the response. "Now, Master Shell, the coming battle shall decide between us."

The outstretched hand of the Tory found the latch and threw wide the door. He stepped out into the light of the rising moon, and Ethan, following to the threshold, watched his figure glide away.

Suddenly the clear report of a firearm cut the stillness, and the young partisan sprang away.

"Red Fox? Red Fox?" he called in commanding tones.

There was a quick answer, and the lithe figure of the young Otari bounded into view. Ethan's eyes flashed.

"What have you done?" he cried, seizing the Indian's arm. "You turned Captain Rough over to me, and now you've deprived me of the vengeance I had hoped to take in battle."

"The serpent has not been touched," replied Red Fox, as a singular expression settled over his face. "The Otari only shot Captain Rough's hat from his head," and he held up to Ethan's gaze the coonskin headdress of their late prisoner.

"Red Fox only wanted his cap, little white chief," continued the red boy. "He might have had his scalp," and with this he coolly thrust the cap into his belt and grinned triumphantly.

"What all did you take from Captain Rough besides his rifle?" Ethan queried.

Red Fox buried his hand in his bullet pouch and drew out a crumpled paper.

Ethan took it and went back into the cabin.

"So!" he exclaimed, after a hurried glance at the writing. "My Lord Cornwallis has commissioned the Tory ruffian. He is a real captain, and if he escapes the bullets of our men he will grace his shoulders with the King's epaulets."

He laughed when he reached the bottom of the commission, which had been signed by Cornwallis' own hand, and then placed it in his pockets.

"I may return the commission to Captain Rough with my compliments," he resumed. "A full-fledged captain, ha, ha! If King George could see his new officer he might blush. After all, the mountaineers would have been compelled to treat the captain as a prisoner of war."

Red Fox waited silently at the door for his white friend, and when Ethan joined him he said:

"What did the talking paper say?"

"Captain Rough is a British officer, Red Fox. We had no right to take his life tonight."

The young Indian stamped the ground beneath his feet, and Ethan noticed the wild light that flashed up in his eyes.

"Red Fox knows no King! His hand is against all who wear the frocks of the white serpent across the big water."

"Yes, I know, boy," answered Ethan, gently. "I know that you have suffered at the hands of the redcoats, but I thank you tonight for turning Captain Rough over to me. I trust you will never have cause to regret it."

They turned their faces toward the mountain encampment, and when they had reached it Jason Moore sprang to Ethan's side.

"You're jes' in time for the march!" he cried. "Colonel Campbell has been looking for you, for he wants you boys to fight under his eye."

"And we cannot fight under the eye of a braver man!" exclaimed Ethan, for he knew that Colonel Campbell was one of the most gallant men in the South. "Where is he, Jason?"

"Over yonder, lad."

Ethan advanced to where Colonel Campbell stood beside his black horse, and saluted.

"I shall consider it an honor to obey your commands," he said. "The liberty band, I trust, will not fail you."

"I know it will not. I know its mettle, and I am proud to lead such boys."

Colonel Campbell seized Ethan's hand and held it for a long time.

"For Washington and liberty!" he exclaimed, looking into the young partisan's eyes.

"For the freedom of the Colonies!" cried Ethan, as he felt his blood pulsate thru his veins. "You will find no coward in our ranks when we are face to face with the enemy!" And as his hand fell from Colonel Campbell's grasp, he turned to seek Allan and tell him the good news.

This interesting story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

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ONLY ROSES.

To a garden full of posies
  Cometh one to gather flowers,
  And he wanders thru its bowers
Toying with the wanton roses,
  Who, uprising from their beds,
  Hold on high their shameless heads
With their pretty lips a-pouting
Never doubting—never doubting
  That for Cytherean posies
  He would gather aught but roses!

In a nest of weeds and nettles
  Lay a violet, half hidden,
  Hoping that his glance unbidden
Yet might fall upon her petals.
  Tho she lived alone, apart,
  Hope lay nestling at her heart,
But alas! the cruel awaking
Set her little heart a-breaking.
  For he gathered for his posies
  Only roses—only roses!

—Sir W. S. Gilbert.

* * *

Thru His Skypiece.

At the theater the other evening Wee Willie noticed that the cornet player had an old hat hanging on his music rack to serve as a muffler for the music.

Turning to his mother the boy observed:

"Papa can do nearly everything, can't he?"

"Yes, dear," the mother answered.

"Can he play in that band?"

"Perhaps."

"Can he play a horn like that man does?"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Can he play thru a hat like that?"

The mother glanced slyly at the boy's father as she replied:

"No, dear, the best thing your father does thru his hat is a talking stunt."

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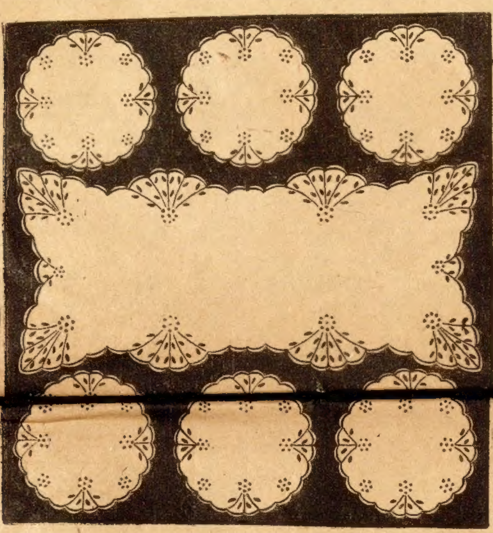

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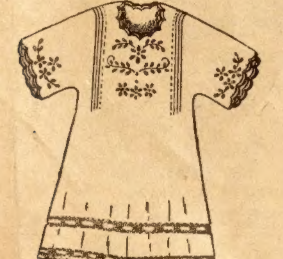

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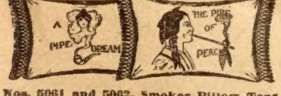

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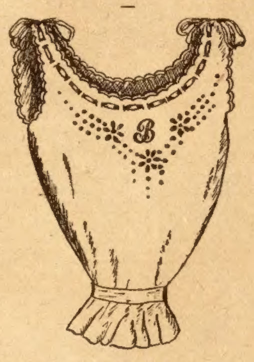

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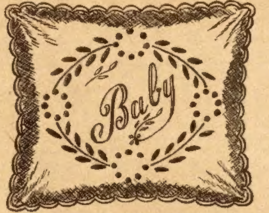

No. 1713, Baby Pillow.

* * *

Courtesy Pays.

A conductor, whom we shall call Jim Brown for the purpose of this story, had developed the courtesy habit.

But that habit did not keep trouble away from him. His wife fell ill. His savings went to the hospital. He found it impossible to pay his grocery bill.

The future looked dark. He did not know what minute the grocery store would shut off his credit. One day his daughter told him that the clerk at the store had told her that she could have no more goods until the bill was paid.

Jim sat down and thought for a minute. "I wish I knew the man that owns that store," he said to himself. "If he knew what I've been up against, maybe he'd be easier on me. I'll go and see him anyway."

Fearful of the reception he might receive, Jim, his hat in his hand, was shown into the private office of the storekeeper. The man at the desk looked up. "Hello," he said. "What can I do for you?"

The question was friendly. Jim felt the good will back of it.

Jim told his story. "Sure, you can have more time," said the merchant. Jim thanked him. "I'll tell you why you are getting it," said the merchant. "I have watched you at work on your car whenever I have been with you. Your courtesy, your patience in answering fool questions made a most favorable impression upon me. You must be all right or you would not act that way. Your credit is good at this store."

Suppose Jim had been a grouchy, cantankerous, discourteous conductor! Would he have received help when he needed it most? You can never tell when an investment in being decent will pay a dividend.

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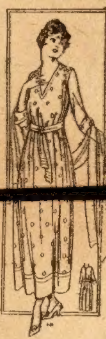

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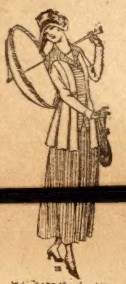

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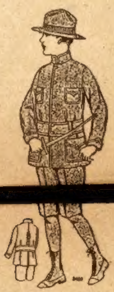

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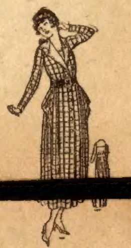

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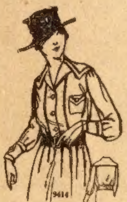

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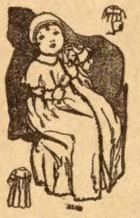

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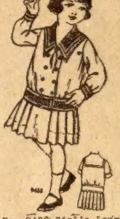

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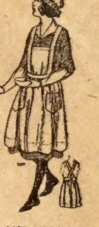

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But I should like to know who 'twas
  That planted all the weeds!

THE CIRCUS.

"Hi there! Little Miss Muffet, come on over! Tommy Tucker, come on over! Jack and Jill, Mistress Mary, come 'ere! Hurry up! Run, all of you! I got something dandy to tell you!"

Little Miss Muffet and Tommy Tucker ran out of their houses and down their porch steps. Jack and Jill set their pail of water on the sidewalk and Mistress Mary hurried down her garden walk and they all came a-running down the street and across the road to the field where Little Boy Blue was tending the sheep and cows to hear what he had to tell them.

"We're goin' to have a circus! Mother Goose says we may! We're goin' to have a circus like I dreamed about!" Boy Blue told them.

"Goody! Goody! Goody! 'Twill be the very thing. We'll have a grand performance in a great, big circus ring!" they all shouted.

"That is, all but Mistress Mary. You know, Mistress Mary is quite contrary, and she turned up her nose and said, "You don't know how to have a circus. You never saw one and you haven't a monkey nor an elephant, nor a lion—nor anything. A lot you know about a circus!"

"Know more about it than you do," said Little Boy Blue, "'cause Bobby Shafto brought me a circus book when he came back from sea, and I dreamed a circus and Bobby Shafto saw one and he's going to be the manager, and anyhow, you don't have to be in our circus if you don't want to, Mistress Mary quite contrary."

That made Mistress Mary cross for a few minutes, but pretty soon she was as much interested as any one.

Simple Simon came along and stopped to see what the excitement was, then he went over to the other field where Little Bo Peep was tending her sheep to tell her about it.

That evening when every one's work was finished, they all met at Mother Goose's house to plan the circus. They grew so excited that Cross Patch forgot to be cross and Sleepy Head forgot to be sleepy.

Even Old King Cole came to the meeting. He said his Fiddlers Three might lead the circus parade and be the band. The boy who owned the little pony whose name was Dapple Gray said he would loan him to Curly Locks to ride in the parade, and he offered to ride over to Banbury Cross to see the Fair Lady who rides on a white horse. She has rings on her fingers and bells on her toes and she always makes music wherever she goes.

Old Mother Hubbard said her dog knew some fine tricks. Little Tommy Tucker's mother said she would teach him a new song, for he always sang for his supper.

For the next two weeks, the people in Mother Goose Land were so busy that they hardly had time to eat and sleep.

When they asked the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe what she would do to help at the circus, she said: "Land sakes alive! "It'll be all I can do to get the children's clothes fixed so they can all go."

The circus plans went like a top. There was just one accident. The day before the circus day, Jack and Jill fell down hill when they went after a pail of water. Mother Goose put them to bed with their heads all wrapped up with vinegar and brown paper. Of course they cried because they couldn't go to the circus, but Mother Goose promised that the parade should come right past their house so they could see it from their window.

How I wish you and I might have seen that circus parade! It was better than lions and tigers and monkeys and elephants!

The Fiddlers Three fiddled such a jolly tune that the horses and ponies pranced beautifully. The clever little Black Hen rode on Old Mother Hubbard's dog's back. Curly Locks wore a beautiful fluffy white dress covered with spangles and she had gauze wings on her shoulders and looked just like a beautiful little fairy. The Hey Diddle Diddle cat sat on the farmer's horse and played his fiddle and the dish and spoon danced along behind. Simple Simon was the clown. He wore a funny striped suit and rode in a little cart drawn by one of Bo Peep's sheep.

Almost every one in Mother Goose Land came to the circus. Even the Crooked man walked a crooked mile to get there. The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe brought every one of her children, and there were so many of them that they took up a seat that reached half way round the tent. Georgie Porgie came in and sat right next to Little Bo Peep. She ran over to Mother Goose because Georgie Porgie was the bad little boy who kissed the girls and made them cry.

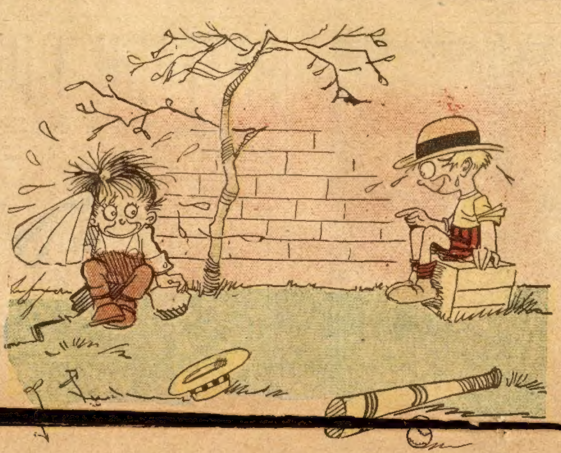
Bobby Shafto said there must be a grand entry when all the performers marched around the ring.

You should have seen the Cow That Jumped Over the Moon! She jumped thru six hoops and never missed once. Old Mother Hubbard's dog danced and stood on his head and climbed a ladder. The fiddling cat fiddled for the Dish and Spoon to dance. The Man in Brown made his pig fly up in the air, then brought him down again, then the pig flew up again and swung on a high trapeze. The clown did funny things and made the people laugh.

The very last part of the circus was a race between the Butcher, the Baker and the Candlestick Maker. The Butcher won and every one cheered him.

Bobby Shafto said it was every bit as good as the circus he saw when he went away to sea, and Little Boy Blue said it was better than the one he dreamed of. All the Mothen Goose Land people had such a good time that now they have a circus every year and if ever you visit Mother Goose Land, be sure to go at circus time.

* * *



"Kin you imagine anything better'n a ton of ice cream, Jimmie?"
"Sure I kin!"
"Wot den?"
"Two tons of ice cream!"

The Some-Account Hen.

It was a day in early springtime. In the barnyard, the chickens stood about in little groups and dozed in the sunshine. It was so pleasant to have warm weather after the long, cold winter.

"I wonder why Farmer Higgins doesn't make way with that little speckled-brown hen," complained a big White Rock hen to a nearby hen. "She is a poor layer, so of what account is she?"

The little speckled-brown hen did not wait to hear the other white hen's reply. Instead, she crept away and hid herself close to the fence about the yard. Somehow, this quiet little hen couldn't get used to the other hens' taunting remarks. And being the only speckled hen in a flock of white chickens and living at the ranch called "White Rock Poultry Ranch," she had none to tell her troubles to, none to sympathize with her. So she quietly hid herself and her drooping feathers drooped even lower.

"I'm afraid I made a mistake in trying to raise these chicks without a mother hen with them. It's colder on the ground than I had supposed."

It was Mrs. Farmer Higgins who spoke. The little speckled hen looked thru the pickets and saw a woman in a blue gingham dress bending over a dozen fluffy, white chicks.

"You're hungry, aren't you?" went on Mrs. Farmer Higgins, addressing the peeping chicks. "I'll go into the house and bring you something to eat."

The little speckled-brown hen watched the blue gingham dress disappear into the house. She was thinking seriously, and looking around, she saw the two White Rocks with their heads close together.

That settled the matter. With a hop, the little brown hen leaped over tne fence and settled herself among the peeping chicks.

"Cluck, cluck, cluck," said the little speckled hen, while the little chicks gazed at her wonderingly. For a moment they hesitated, then one by one they crowded under her and cuddled down for a nap.

Many exclamations of delight greeted the new mother hen when Mrs. Farmer Higgins returned with some chicken feed. Such names as "Good Biddy" and "Mother Hen" more than offset the remarks of the proud White Rocks.

"You may keep these chicks for your very own, if you wish," said Mrs. Farmer Higgins, throwing a liberal handful of feed into the pen.

"Cluck, cluck, cluck," answered the speckled hen, gathering the chicks closer, and then peering thru the fence, sne called to the White Rocks: "You see, my dear hens," she clucked kindly, "even a little brown-speckled hen is of some account after all."

* * *

NANOOK.

Nanook was a dog belonging to Archdeacon Stuck, whose work in Alaska required him to travel in that cold land, in winter as well as in summer. He has written a book entitled "Ten Thousand Miles in a Dog Sled," in which he pays tribute to his "best loved dog." Nanook loved to play a game of "toe-treading" with his master, and when he won he "would seize my ankle in his jaws and make me hop around on one foot, to his great delight."

Nanook learned to open a gate, contrary to orders. One day, says Archdeacon Stuck, when this happened, "I picked up a stick and gave him a few sharp blows with it. Then I said, 'Now, you stay in here; I'll give you a sound thrashing if you do that again!' The moment I loosed his collar the dog went deliberately to the gate, pulled out the wedge with his teeth, lifted the latch and opened the gate, then turned round and said to me, 'Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow!' It was so pointed that a passer-by who had paused to see the proceedings said to me, 'Well, you know where you can go to! That's the dog-gonedest dog I ever seen!'"

Nanook's end was pathetic. Mortally hurt by a misguided horse's kick, "Nanook knew perfectly well that it was all over with him. When I put my face down to his and said 'Good-by,' he licked me for the first time in his life. In the six years I had owned him and driven him I had never felt his tongue before, tho I had always loved him best of the bunch."

* * *

A HIGGLEDY PIGGLEDY.

She said, "I hadn't ought to," and she said, "I done it." Twice in the same day she said, "I ain't going to."

Aunt Belle said to her, "What would you think of a little girl who put on her dress wrong side around, wore her shoes on the wrong feet, and the bow on her hat in the back instead of the front?"

"I think she would be very uncomfortable," said Mary Ann.

"She would be a higgledy-piggledy," said Aunt Belle; "and the way she put on her clothes would be much like the way you use your words. There is a right way to put on your clothes; did you ever think about that?"

"No, Aunt Belle," said Mary Ann, "I thought it was so because you said so."

"All over the whole world there is a right order for words. They fit together like buttons and buttonholes. You know the right way; can't you remember it every time and not be a higgledy-piggledy?"

Mary Ann screwed her face into a funny little twist and said slowly, "Yes, Aunt Belle; I ought not to forget. I'm not going to be careless, and I did it right this time."

* * *

HER DEFINITION.

A little girl in the primary school was asked to tell the difference between the words "foot" and "feet." She said.

"One feet is a foot, and a whole lot of foots is a feet."

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